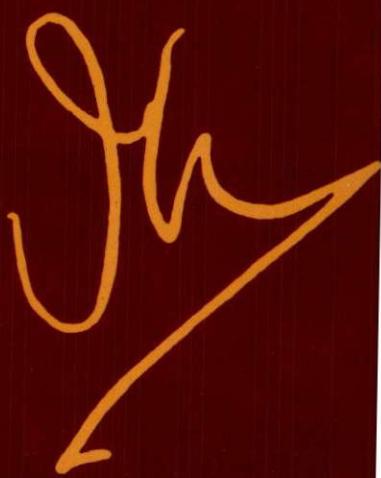


2 Selected  
works of  
Jawaharlal  
Nehru

A large, stylized orange signature of Jawaharlal Nehru's name, "Jawaharlal Nehru", is written in a flowing, cursive script. The signature is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the cover.

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru





**Selected  
works of  
Jawaharlal  
Nehru**



When I presided - I have a mission on one side  
France and a Japanese on the other. The latter is an  
old letter to Katayama a well known socialist who was  
thrust out of Japan in the old days  
The two start in the right are those of the delegation.

PRESIDING OVER A SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AGAINST  
IMPERIALISM, BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY, 1927.

Advisory Board

# Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume Two

A Project of the  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
Memorial Fund



**B. R. PUBLISHING CORPORATION**  
[Division of D. K. Publishers Distributors (P) Ltd.]  
**DELHI-110007**

# Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume V

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## Advisory Board

M. Chalapathi Rau

H. Y. Sharada Prasad

B. R. Nanda

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed the world.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West, the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America.

Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an effort to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are

General Editor

evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality, S. Gopal

by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men.

Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to build on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanity.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming



## FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

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contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

*India Janath.*

New Delhi

Chairman

18 January 1972

Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

## EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume, the second in the series, deals with the many-sided activities of Jawaharlal Nehru from 1923 till his return from Europe in December 1927. In 1923 Congressmen contested the municipal elections in many important towns and in most cases secured a majority of seats. Jawaharlal Nehru was elected not only a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board but also to the office of Chairman and served in that capacity for two years. This was his first involvement in official administration, and his notes, memoranda and reports written as Chairman are of significance for both his ideas and his attitudes. He was also, at the same time, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and President of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee and, at times, also Chairman of the Allahabad Town Congress Committee; and just as he sought to impart the spirit of national service into municipal work, he strove to strengthen efficient methods of functioning in the national organization.

Then, in March 1926, Jawaharlal Nehru sailed for Europe. Though the journey was undertaken primarily in the interests of his wife's health, the visit served to deepen his understanding of world affairs. Apart from attending lectures in Geneva, he attended the International Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels in February 1927, served as a member of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism, and, before his return, paid a brief visit to the Soviet Union. His letters written from Europe, his speeches at the Brussels Congress and his reports on it, and his articles on the Soviet Union (later published as a book) show a mind awakening to fresh horizons.

The methods of editing adopted in the first volume are being followed in the subsequent volumes. The biographical footnotes and the terms in the glossary in the first volume have not been repeated.

The footnotes written by Jawaharlal Nehru for his various articles have been shown with an asterisk, and the footnotes added now have been numbered.

As in the first volume, we have relied heavily on the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru made available to us by Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

Acknowledgment is due to the Allahabad Nagar Mahapalika (formerly the Allahabad Municipal Board), the U. P. Government and State Archives, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, the Jamia Millia Islamia, Shri Jamal Khwaja, Dr. N. S. Hardikar, Shrimati Padmaja Naidu and Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit for permission to include material in

their possession. The late Dr. Syed Mahmud and the late Shri Sri Prakasa were good enough to grant us similar permission. We are grateful to *The Leader*, *The Hindu*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Tribune* and the *Aaj* for allowing us to reprint letters and reports first published in their columns. The Navajivan Trust has permitted us to include an article by Jawaharlal Nehru published in *Young India*.

The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

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AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL BOARD

Presiding over a session of the International Congress against Imperialism, Brussels, February 1927.

*frontispiece*

With Syed Mahmud and A. M. Khwaja, 1925.

Ceremony of opening the mouth.

*between pp. 224—25*

At Brussels, 1927.

With some delegates to the International Congress against Imperialism, Brussels, February 1927.

*between pp. 272—73*

With some delegates to the International Congress, Brussels, February 1927.

Photostat copy of the first page of the confidential note to the Working Committee.

*between pp. 304—05*

Moscow, 1927.

Photostat copy of the first page of Soviet Russia.

*between pp. 368—69*



Chairman  
ALLAHABAD MUNICIPAL BOARD

The somewhat brief report of the proceedings of the special meeting of the Allahabad Municipal Board held yesterday, which appears in your issue dated the 5th instant, might perhaps mislead the unwary or the unenlightened reader. I trust that you will, of your courtesy, permit an explanation. You mention that four names—Sy. Panjabotam Das Tandon, Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, Noorul Mulkar, Bischal<sup>1</sup> and my name—were mentioned as likely candidates for the chairmanship. From this it might appear that there was some idea of contest between Moulvi Tandon and Jafri and I. This is entirely wrong. Under no imaginable circumstances could there have been a contest between any two of us. The burden and responsibility of the chairmanship for term about on me because my other colleagues would not stand. For long we had hoped that my beloved friend and colleague Baba Panjabotam Das Tandon would allow us to put him at our head in the Board, to guide us in the intricacies of municipal administration, and to show us how best to serve our city and fellow citizens of Allahabad. With great difficulty he consented. Subsequently it appeared that some Mohammedan gentlemen had strenuously been in favor of having a Muslim chairman. There was no Hindu-Muslim question involved in the matter, but some efforts were made to create one and thus perhaps to influence a few voices. To us of the Congress and the Akhil Bharatiya it mattered little whether a Hindu or Muslim was selected chairman, provided he was competent and was a noncooperative. We would gladly have put forward our dear colleague Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, but for his illness which has incapacitated him for a while from doing any work. As soon as Baba Panjabotam Das Tandon got to know of the efforts to create trouble between Hindus and Muslims over the question of the chairmanship, with his fine delicacy and nobility he insisted that he would not stand and that we should put forward Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri in spite of his illness. Mr. Jafri during his illness could only be a nominal chairman; but if our Muslim cooperative friends selected a Muslim, a Muslim they would have, but he would be a noncooperative. We determined as a party to put forward Mr. Jafri.

1. Lawyer by the profession. *The Leader*, 8 April 1923.

2. Retired district and sessions judge, member of the Allahabad Municipal Board.



## 1. On Election as Chairman<sup>1</sup>

Sir,

The somewhat brief report of the proceedings of the special meeting of the Allahabad Municipal Board held yesterday, which appears in your issue dated the 5th instant, might perhaps mislead the unwary or the unenlightened reader. I trust that you will, of your courtesy, permit an explanation. You mention that four names — Syt. Purushottam Das Tandon, Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, Moulvi Mubarak Hussain<sup>2</sup> and my name — were mentioned as likely candidates for the chairmanship. From this it might appear that there was some idea of contest between Messrs. Tandon and Jafri and I. This is utterly wrong. Under no imaginable circumstances could there have been a contest between any two of us. The burden and responsibility of the chairmanship has been thrust on me because my other colleagues would not stand. For long we had hoped that my honoured friend and co-worker Babu Purushottam Das Tandon would allow us to put him at our head in the Board, to guide us in the intricacies of municipal administration, and to show us how best to serve our city and fellow citizens of Allahabad. With great difficulty he consented. Subsequently it appeared that some Mohammedan gentlemen laid stress on having a Muslim chairman. There was no Hindu-Muslim question involved in the matter, but some efforts were made to create one and thus perhaps to influence a few voters. To us of the Congress and the Khilafat, it mattered little whether a Hindu or Muslim was elected chairman, provided he was competent and was a noncooperator. We would gladly have put forward our dear colleague Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, but for his illness which has incapacitated him for a while from doing any work. As soon as Babu Purushottam Das Tandon got to know of the efforts to create trouble between Hindus and Muslims over the question of the chairmanship, with his fine delicacy and nobility he insisted that he would not stand and that we should put forward Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri in spite of his illness. Mr. Jafri during his illness could only be a nominal chairman; but if our Muslim cooperator friends wanted a Muslim, a Muslim they would have, but he would be a noncooperator. We determined as a party to put forward Mr. Jafri

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 6 April 1923.

2. Retired district and sessions judge; member of the Allahabad Municipal Board.

as a candidate if the cooperator Muslims really were keen on having a Muslim. It soon appeared, however, that all the tall talk about a Muslim chairman indulged in by our cooperator friends was merely a cloak for having one of their own friends elected. We were informed that they would oppose Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri and would put forward a retired pensioner as their candidate.

Under these circumstances there was little point in our putting forward Mr. Jafri in his present serious state of health. Mr. Tandon not agreeing to stand, I was asked by him and my other colleagues to stand and most reluctantly and unwillingly I bowed down to their wishes. The burden they have thrust on me is great and I do not know how I shall succeed in shouldering it. Nor do I know yet how it will affect or interfere with my other and to me more important work. I feel that the right person has not been chosen. I know that Mr. Tandon or Mr. Jafri, or indeed some other of my colleagues, would have been a far better chairman than I can hope to be. I only hope that before long, my friends will take pity on me and consent to relieve me of this responsibility and to put a better man in my place.

Allahabad April 4 [1923] Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. To Collector of Allahabad<sup>1</sup>

4 April 1923

Dear Mr. Knox,

I have just received your letter. You have been incorrectly informed about the proposal to discuss a resolution on the 5th. So far as I am aware no meeting of the Board is taking place tomorrow.

I shall be glad to see you tomorrow morning at any time between 8 and 10.30 a.m. I am sorry I cannot come in the afternoon as I shall be going out of the station for a while.

As you are doubtless aware I have come to the Board to represent a certain policy and to do my utmost to further that policy, with due regard to the betterment of the city and people of Allahabad. I desire

1. Allahabad Municipal Board (referred to hereafter as A.M.B.) File 2/XII-4 of 1923.

no conflict with anyone but I shall certainly endeavour to carry out that policy. As Chairman of the Board I must obey and carry out the directions of the Board. If I happen to disagree in any matter of principle, or if the Congress Committee so desires it, I shall tender my resignation. Other considerations are not likely to influence me much. I regret that I cannot split myself up into various compartments—one for "general politics", another for "Municipal affairs" and so on.

Will you be good enough to drop me a line to say what time would suit you tomorrow morning. Please send your reply to my residence, Anand Bhawan.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. Circular to U.P. Congressmen on Municipal Work<sup>1</sup>

In obedience to the directions of the Provincial Congress Committee, we endeavoured to capture the municipalities of this province. We ran our candidates for them on the clear and oft-repeated ground of Congress and Khilafat policy and programme. We stood for those principles and not merely for the individuals we had put forward; we made it clear that the main purpose of our going to the municipalities was to help in the national struggle. We did not desire to wreck the municipalities or to play the part of obstructionists. But we wanted to work them honestly and efficiently in the best interests of our cities and above all in accordance with the Congress—Khilafat Programme.

The support that we demanded we have received. The public of these provinces has shown most unmistakably on which side its sympathies are. They have not voted for our little self, but for the Congress and Khilafat and have thus made it clear that they want us to work according to the Congress programme. How then are we to work? I do not wish to answer the question in its narrower sense just

1. To all District, Town and Tahsil Congress Committees and members of the P.C.C., 5 April 1923.

U.P. Government Secret Police Abstract Vol. XLI, No. 15(17), 14 April 1923.

at present. It will perhaps be desirable for Congressmen connected with municipalities to meet together and formulate a joint consistent policy in regard to local demands. We can easily meet about the time of the next Provincial Committee meeting which will take place in Allahabad on the 12th May, 1923. Meanwhile it will be desirable if brief reports were sent to us about the condition of the various municipalities, the Congress strength in them and the general outlook. The question of hoisting the national flag on the municipal building may crop up in any city and I should specially like to know your views and your Committee's views in the matter.

I cannot say much about the details of your future municipal work but I am very clear about the principle. The great work that lies before every Congressman is to fight for Swaraj unceasingly, to strengthen the Congress and not to rest till we have achieved our goal. Everything else is secondary. We have gone to the municipalities to help our primary object, not for secondary and comparatively unimportant reasons. Let us be careful that we do not forget this or else our capturing the municipalities will become a curse to us rather than a blessing. If by our presence in the Municipal Board our Congress work suffers then it is better for us to leave the Board and concentrate on the Congress work. On no account can we allow the Congress to take a back seat. You may have taken office. My colleague and fellow Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, Chaudhri Khaliq-uz-Zaman, has been elected Chairman of the Lucknow municipality. Our General Secretary, Pandit Harkaran Nath Misra, has been elected Vice-Chairman. I have been made Chairman of the Allahabad Board. It is somewhat of a shock to me to occupy the post and to carry the additional burden. We had all hoped that our comrade Srijut Purushottam Das Tandon would honour us by accepting this office. But he was reluctant and ultimately for various reasons into which I need not go, I was put in the chair. I accepted the office because my comrades demanded this of me, but I accepted it with considerable misgivings. I feel that the wrong man has been chosen when better men were available. I trust that I will be permitted at an early date to hand over charge to some colleague of ours fitter for the task than I am.

Today I am Chairman of Allahabad Municipality and Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. I have little doubt in my mind about the relative importance of the two offices. I am prouder of the Secretaryship and if the Committee will have me I intend sticking to this Secretaryship. This is my main work and I shall not permit other functions to interfere with this to any large extent. The day I am satisfied that the municipal Chairmanship is injuring my Congress work that day I shall submit my resignation of the Chairmanship. For the

Chairmanship is to me only the means for serving the nation for hastening Swaraj. The best method of doing so is to go straight ahead on the lines chalked out by our leaders and not to wander in the shady alleys and lands of constitutional activity. My mentality is revolutionary. I believe in revolution and in direct action and in battle. I know that many times we shall have to advance and engage the enemy and offer the inevitable price of freedom before we finally carry out the citadel. But I know also that revolutions require training and discipline, that direct action requires soldiers. Therefore, we must organise and instil discipline amongst our workers. I have written at some length to remove any misapprehension that may have arisen on account of my becoming Chairman of the municipality. I want my fellow-workers to know and understand me completely. If any one imagines that I am going to function as Chairman of the Allahabad Board for the next three years and to let my other duties suffer he is grossly mistaken. I do not forget the history and agony of India during the last few years and I am not going to spend most of my time in any office while my beloved leader lies in jail. I shall give battle whenever I can. I shall fight and hit hard whenever I may. That is my main function till Swaraj is attained. All else is training and preparation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

**4. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax<sup>1</sup>**

No. 104/XII-2/2

Allahabad  
dated April 24, 1923

Sir,

With reference to G.O. no. 1370/XI-595E, dated April 10, 1923 received under your office endorsement no. 6143/XXIII-183, dated April 14, 1923, I have the honour to forward a copy of Board's resolution

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department File No. 595-E, April 1927. Passenger tax, Allahabad Municipality—No. 9(a) and 9(b).

no. 22, dated April 21, 1923 accepting the following rates of commission demanded by the East Indian and other Railways for the collection of the tax.

1. Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway	.. 3% (subject to a maximum of Rs. 1,800 per annum)
2. East Indian Railway	.. 5%
3. Bengal North-Western Railway	.. 1%

The board also undertakes to bear the initial expenses to be incurred by the East Indian Railway in supplying revised printed tickets.

(2) With reference to your enquiry as to how the money realized from this tax will be spent, I have to draw your attention to resolution no. 690<sup>2</sup> of the board already sent to you. All sanitary improvement in the city will be conducive to the health and convenience of the pilgrims and a special effort is being made to improve the sanitation of the city. The water supply also affects the pilgrims greatly. Tube wells are being sunk in order to improve the water supply and the tube well in Daraganj is specially meant for the convenience of the pilgrims. Our new budget estimate for 1923-24, which I hope to send you within 10 days will indicate to you the manner in which the board intends to spend money on sanitary projects. These projects will cost the board a far larger sum of money than is likely to be realized from the tax. It is our intention to cater specially for pilgrims and we are asking our Medical Officer of Health to suggest methods whereby we can add to the convenience and health of our visitors.

Yours, etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

COPY OF BOARD'S RESOLUTION

Resolved that the rates of commission demanded by each railway and noted in paragraph 2 of G.O. no. 578 of January 19, 1923 be accepted.

Resolved further that the board undertakes to bear the initial expenses to be incurred by the East Indian Railway in supplying revised printed tickets equal to the stock which will become useless owing to the addition of the tax to the fare.

2. Not included here.

## 5. On the Board's Patronage<sup>1</sup>

The Municipal Board employs a large number of persons in the various departments under its control and has thus a great deal of patronage at its command. It would be a platitude, hardly deserving of repetition, to say that on the integrity and competence of the employees depends the efficiency and utility of the Board. Platitudes are dull things, unpleasant reminders of still more unpleasant facts. I would not have ventured to offer these observations to members of the Board if I had not had the misfortune during the past few days, of coming across several instances where this wholesome platitude was forgotten or ignored. I have been pestered with applications for appointments. Some gentlemen have imagined that my position in the Board would facilitate their entrance to a land flowing with milk and honey. Chits and recommendations have been brought to me from friends and attempts have been made to influence me in favour of various applicants. I have no doubt that every other member has a similar tale to tell. The Executive Officer has made the same complaint to me. There is evidently an impression amongst some people that the Board is a charitable organisation meant to supply soft jobs to the needy and the deserving, an asylum for the halt and the lame who have failed in the battle of life and who now seek shelter under the hospitable roof of the municipality.

I think that members should make it very clear that this kind of thing will not be tolerated for an instant. I would suggest that some general principles be laid down for the guidance of the public and all applicants for posts. Personally I have an almost unconquerable aversion to the "chit" system. Nearly everybody in India gives a testimonial, and nearly everyone flaunts these "chits" in the face of a long suffering people. I would suggest that such "chits" or testimonials should be made taboo. Every person who applies should give references only. The necessary enquiries can be made from the persons referred to. Any person bringing a specific letter of recommendation addressed to a member or the Executive Officer should be viewed with disfavour. It should be made quite clear that an applicant lessens his chances by trying to influence the officer concerned in this manner. If all members refrained from giving testimonials to applicants for posts

and only answered references made to them, a healthier atmosphere would immediately be introduced in our activities.

I shall be very glad if members would make suggestions as to how to deal with the question. It is not easy of solution. Yet I am sure we can solve it if only we stick to this principle that incompetence is a deadly sin and will not be tolerated in any department of our work. I would personally introduce the element of responsibility as far as possible in every department and hold the head strictly accountable for any lapse or slackness of his subordinate. Only thus can work prosper.

The Executive Officer and I will try our utmost to improve matters according to our lights but the help of every member is needed and I earnestly and respectfully solicit this help.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman  
24-4-23

## 6. On the Report of the Water Works Enquiry Committee<sup>1</sup>

The report<sup>2</sup> reveals an extraordinary state of affairs. I am not concerned with individual responsibility. It is clear that without responsibility the Water Works Department is being run in an inefficient manner. The daily life of the people is perhaps more affected by this Department than by any other. A single day's stoppage means misery for thousands. I trust the Board will see to it that this Department is run on thoroughly efficient and business lines. Every officer in the Department must be made to understand that the Board will hold him personally responsible for the proper running of the departmental machinery. Success and failure will be the tests applied. In case of

1. *The Leader*, 30 April 1923.

2. The Board had appointed a committee to enquire into the administration of the water works, and the committee had reprimanded the engineer for neglecting his duties. The report and its recommendations were considered at an emergency meeting of the Allahabad Municipal Board on 28 April 1923.

the latter, excuses will not find favour with the Board, and immediate and drastic action will be taken. Only such officers should be employed who are prepared for this responsibility.

I have noted with surprise the remarks made by the Superintending Engineer, Public Health Department, regarding the administration of our water works. Since August 1920 or perhaps even earlier he has been passing very disparaging remarks on the state of the water works. I do not know if these remarks were brought to the notice of the Board, and if so, what action the Board took. A remark in the report to the effect that the 'Executive Officer threatened the Water Works Engineer that the matter would be laid before the Board if any further delay occurred' has surprised me considerably. From this it appears that the Board was not usually informed of these matters. A system which tolerates this state of affairs is wrong. Any serious criticism by a responsible officer of our work must be brought to the notice of the Board without delay and immediate steps should be taken to meet it.

I trust that the enquiry will result in straightening up affairs in the Department.

Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. On Electoral Reform<sup>1</sup>

"Upon the matter of regulating the suffrage", said Montesquieu<sup>2</sup>, "depends the destruction or salvation of States." And since the days of Montesquieu, a hundred and fifty years ago, a continuous demand has come forth from the people for a broadening of the franchise, and latterly for universal suffrage. In India also stress has often been laid and rightly on this extension of the right to vote. But equally important is the technique of elections and the method for preventing fraud and corrupt practices. Everyone who has had anything to do with elections in any country knows how difficult it is to deal with

1. 7 May 1923. A.M.B. File 3/XII-1 of 1923.

2. (1689—1755); French political philosopher and author of *De L'Esprit des Lois*.

these questions. In Allahabad we have only recently had some extraordinary instances of impersonation and unfair dealing. Members of the Board, fresh from their elections, would do well to give a thought to these matters and endeavour to find a way out.

I have received two letters on this subject from Government which I am circulating amongst members for their information. In one of them the proposal is made that in municipal elections each candidate should be provided with a separate ballot box marked by some distinctive colour or emblem, or alternatively, that on voting papers in addition to the names of the candidates there should be added some distinguishing symbols. If either of these proposals is adopted and no other change made, it might result in our having an array of a dozen or more ballot boxes or a ballot paper with a multitude of signs and symbols. It is also clear that with a ballot box for every candidate there can be no secrecy of voting even for the literates.

To my mind the chief difficulty in Allahabad is the existence of plural constituencies. In non-Moslem Ward III there are as many as five seats. In Ward IV there are four seats amongst the Moslems and four amongst the non-Moslems. This is very undesirable and the average illiterate voter is hopelessly at sea when he faces the returning officer. The first reform that is needed therefore is the creation of single member constituencies. Plural constituencies can only be justified if we have proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. That is admittedly the best and the most scientific system and it gives every minority a chance, and I earnestly hope that before very long this will take the place of our system of communal representation. But this system is only meant for those who have received a fair amount of education. Thus for the present there should be no plural constituencies.

In New York and elsewhere in America great importance is attached to having small election districts and usually they consist of 400 voters, or at most 600. It is very difficult in a small district of this kind to impersonate voters or to indulge in many other corrupt practices. Thus we should aim at dividing up our single member constituency into a number of smaller districts each having a polling booth. The chief objection to this is the multiplication of election officials. But that evil is preferable to shameless impersonation.

Another check on corrupt practices in America is a system of personal registration in every town of more than 5000 inhabitants. This takes place some days before the polling and only those who come and register themselves personally are entitled to vote.

If the above changes are brought about then it will not be necessary or desirable to have a large number of ballot boxes. It may however be desirable even then to have a symbol on the voting paper. Such symbols have been in use in America e.g. the Democratic candidate has a star, the Republican an eagle and the Prohibitionist a fountain.

The second proposal made by Government is that every candidate for municipal election should be required to deposit a security of Rs. 50/- which will be liable to be confiscated in the event of his securing less than a certain percentage of votes recorded. I do not know if Rs. 50/- will keep away many aspirants. Still I think that it would be desirable if this proposal were acted upon.

I shall be glad if members will favour me with their opinion on the above points at an early date.

Jawaharlal Nehru

### 8. On Municipal Work during April and May 1923<sup>1</sup>

I am obliged to those Chairmen of Committees and heads of departments who have been good enough to send me reports of the work done during the last two months....

I notice that the standing committees are not taking as much interest in the work of their departments as they should. Extraordinarily few meetings are held and even then there is a poor attendance. Each Committee should keep a very close watch on its department. Instead of this I find that a committee meets once in a blue moon and if, fortunately, a quorum is present, a number of routine matters are gone through. If it was necessary for the board to meet 19 times during the two months it was necessary for each committee to meet at least once a week. The record is very poor. The Octroi<sup>2</sup> Committee met six times of which two meetings had to be adjourned for

1. *The Leader*, 16 June 1923.

This long note, relevant extracts of which have been printed, is of interest as the first official report drafted by Jawaharlal.

2. Octroi is a duty levied on articles on their entry into a town.

want of a quorum. Messrs. Mazhar Husain<sup>3</sup>, Girwar Sahai Saxena<sup>4</sup> and Khan Bahadur Muhammed Abdul Baqi Khan<sup>5</sup> only attended one meeting. An important matter like the revision of the octroi rules could not be taken because of want of a quorum. The Chairman specially drew the attention of members to the importance of this question and yet at the adjourned meeting only the Chairman and Mr. C. T. Robbie<sup>6</sup> were present. It is somewhat surprising to me why so much keenness is exhibited at the time of the election of the standing committees, when many members have no intention of attending meetings or in any way helping the administration of their departments. I have referred to the octroi report. That is, as a matter of fact, the best report I have got. The other reports, excepting the Education Committee's, exhibit a more woeful state of affairs. The Education Committee met five times, one meeting proving abortive for want of a quorum. The Public Health Committee met three times; the Public Works Committee twice, the second meeting having two members only, the chairman being one of the absentees; the Nazul Committee twice and the Town Improvement Committee once only. I have had no report from the Mechanical Plants Committee or the Hackney Carriage Joint Committee, but I presume that they have not distinguished themselves in this particular.

I can understand the Town Improvement Committee not meeting frequently, for, as the Chairman put it, the business of the Committee does not consist of routine work of making plans. But I presume that the process of making plans and brain work generally would be helped by consultation amongst the members of the committee. So far as the other committees are concerned, it is a wonder to me how they can carry on in the manner they do. The Public Health Committee and the Public Works Committee have charge of most important departments. Daily complaints come to me about the work of these departments and yet the committees have only met three times and twice respectively. I have been grieved to notice that the chairman of the Public Works Committee left his charge for a full month. He has sent me a report, one of the lengthiest I have received, and yet I regret I have found little satisfaction in it. It is full of good intentions but little has been done or attempted. Owing to the illness of the municipal engineer, and the absence on leave of the head clerk, work has been hampered and is in great arrears. The Chair-

3. Superintendent, Allahabad High Court and member A.M.B., 1923.

4. Member, A.M.B., 1923.

5. Member and elected Junior Vice-Chairman, A.M.B., June 1924.

6. Secretary, Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, Allahabad.

man of the Committee and his colleagues are 'anxiously waiting to accompany the municipal engineer on his inspection trips'. I would suggest that they might well bestir themselves even before the Municipal engineer comes back from leave. They have heavy work before them. They must immediately see to it that all hydrants are raised above the ground. This matter has become an urgent necessity now and can no longer be trifled with. The fact that sufficient budget provision has not been made for this is no reason why the work should not be taken in hand immediately. Complaints of the water supply have been made and we must remove forthwith all possibilities of contamination....

I would repeat what I have often said in my circular letters and elsewhere. Every head is responsible for his department. He cannot shirk responsibility. Each head clerk will be called to account for the faults of any clerk under him, each head of department will be held personally responsible for all defects in that department. If any head of department thinks that he has incompetents under him, as some reports indicate, let him get rid of them with all speed and without mercy.

I have ventured to criticise various departments and to make some suggestions for future work. My note would be of little value if I did not express my true feelings in the matter. Personally I have reason to be grateful to the permanent officers of the board and to my other colleagues for their uniform courtesy and indulgence. I would specially mention with gratitude the help I have received on all occasions from Mr. N. K. Mukerji<sup>7</sup>, the Junior Vice-Chairman.

June 10, 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

7. Member, General Assembly of United Church of North India, Katra, Allahabad and Secretary, Christian Tract and Book Society; Member, A.M.B., 1920-36.

## 9. On the Treatment of Prostitutes<sup>1</sup>

The question of the residence of prostitutes has been before the Board for many years. I have purposely headed this note differently. I want the question to be considered in its broader aspects and not merely on the narrow ground of place of residence. Let us know what we are driving at and then we may be in a better position perhaps to achieve our purpose. Last year the Board made a brave effort to abolish prostitution by passing a resolution and appointing a committee. The effort was foredoomed to failure. The world would be a very different place if we could abolish prostitution and lying and cruelty and oppression and the thousand and one ills that flesh is heir to by resolution. Unhappily we can proceed but slowly with the task of regeneration.

Admittedly prostitution is an evil and a canker which eats its way into society. It has existed from the dawn of history and we need not be vain enough to imagine that we shall put an end to it suddenly. But every where attempts are made to lessen its evils in the interests of morals and public order and public health. In many cities of the West there prevails a system of regulation and registration but this has largely failed to achieve the end in view. In some cities recognised and inspected brothels are kept. These too are merely drops in the ocean and the vast majority of prostitutes refuse to be either registered or regulated in any way inspite of the best efforts of the police. The general tendency in the West now is for the state not to register or recognise in any other way the profession of prostitution. An indirect way of dealing with the question is to open clinics for the treatment of venereal disease and to spread knowledge of the effects of such disease. It is also realised that prominence given to prostitution is a bad thing and rules are made generally to prevent this. Soliciting is an offence in many countries.

1. A.M.B. General XII-2 Dept. File No. 9 of 1921-22/1926-27.

Many years later, on 14 October 1958, Jawaharlal wrote to Shri V. R. Krishna Iyer on this subject: "This is, of course, a major social problem, and I wish you success in your efforts to deal with it. I confess, however, that I have long felt that the type of efforts that are made usually meet with little success. I remember that, nearly thirty-five years ago, when I was Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality, I tried to deal with this problem and wrote a long note on this subject. I did not succeed to any marked extent. The problem is so much connected with other economic and social aspects of our life that it is a little difficult to separate it. Anyhow, it is good to do something about it."

Prostitution, it is well known, is largely due to two causes — the economic and the human. If we could raise the status of women and afford them honourable careers we would do more towards the lessening of the evil than by any number of byelaws. The human factor is more difficult to deal with, but everything that makes for social betterment and for equality between the sexes helps in the solution of the problem. We are scandalised at the residence of prostitutes in our midst. But prostitutes do not carry on their ancient trade by themselves. They are only one party to the transaction. I seldom hear anything against the other party, the man who exploits the poor woman and casts all the blame on her. The proper way to deal with the question of prostitution is to make it as dishonourable for a man as for a woman to help in it. We cannot do that by rules or byelaws, but only by raising public sentiment in its favour. If public opinion were strong enough we could reduce much of the exploitation and the apparent [consequences] of it. Some prostitution would of course remain so long as men and women do not become better as a whole than they are today.

The proposals to prevent prostitutes from residing in most of the residential or business quarters of the city would necessarily result in their being segregated in a remote corner of the city, if the byelaws were rigorously enforced. Personally I do not think it will be possible to drive out all prostitutes from the prohibited quarters. They may perhaps give up their public appearances but they are likely to carry on privately. But even if we succeed in driving them out and concentrating them in a remote corner of the city, how would this affect us? I shall quote from a European authority on the subject :

"In the course of an enquiry that included all the great cities of Europe from Glasgow to Budapest and from Rome to Christiania I did not meet a single police official who favoured the concentration of even registered prostitutes in a single neighbourhood. Not only is such concentration or segregation impracticable : it is highly undesirable. Prostitution, like crime, is most dangerous and most offensive when it collects in nests. The segregation of prostitution, even if possible, would be objectionable precisely as the segregation of criminals would be objectionable."

I feel that we should lay stress on the following points :

- (i) Prevent prostitutes from residing near colleges, schools & hostels.
- (ii) We should try to put a stop to all soliciting and all public examinations.

We should see to it that as little prominence is given to prostitutes or their trade as possible. The sights to be met with in some parts of the city of prostitutes displaying themselves from balconies etc. are not

desirable. I do not know if we can do anything to stop it but I should certainly like to do so as I consider it is a flagrant kind of soliciting.

- (iii) The Board should encourage homes for women and give every facility to such institutions where widows and other women are afforded shelter and taught useful trade.
- (iv) Carry on some educative propaganda among the people about the harmfulness of venereal diseases. I believe Pt. Krishna Kant Malaviya's resolution deals with this question.
- (v) The laws of the country can help us by raising the age of consent and by imposing extreme penalties on persons exploiting young girls and living on their earnings.

I do not believe in issuing a fiat that prostitutes must not live in any part of the city of Allahabad except a remote corner. If this is done I would think it equally reasonable to reserve another part of Allahabad for the men who exploit women and because of whom prostitution flourishes.

Jawaharlal Nehru

10.6.23

I would add that brothels or regular houses of prostitution should on no account be permitted.

#### **10. On Rules regarding the Residence of Prostitutes<sup>1</sup>**

This matter has been pending for many years and has repeatedly taken up the time of the Board. In spite of many resolutions and several committees no final agreement has been sanctioned. Byelaws have been made and then cancelled and it is not easy to say what rules or byelaws govern the residence of prostitutes at present. The Board made a valiant attempt, by appointing a committee for the purpose, to "abolish absolutely the profession of prostitution", but this noble endeavour did not meet with the success it deserved. The matter is somewhat complicated and I have had to see many files in order to understand its history. In order to save members the trouble of having to go through all those papers and files I am giving some facts below.

1. A.M.B. General XII-2 Dept. File No. 9 of 1921-22/1926-27.

The question of framing draft byelaws to control the residence of prostitutes agitated our Board for some time. Eventually some draft byelaws were framed. These were very stiff and allowed only a small strip of land east of Karelabagh road in ward IV for the residence of prostitutes. They could not reside elsewhere. On

- 29.8.19 These draft byelaws were referred to a sub-committee of 5 (Messrs R. N. Basu etc.)
- 16.11.20 Mr. R. N. Basu sends report on behalf of sub-committee, says no other member of sub-committee attended. Hence report was only his personal one.
- 16.3.21 Board passed 3 byelaws in accordance with recommendations of Basu's committee.
- 14.6.21 These 3 byelaws sanctioned by Govt. and published in Gazette to come into force from 1st January 1922 (see byelaws).
- 6.11.21 Byelaws announced by beat of drum — press etc.
- 6.12.21 Motion to cancel byelaw 1 etc. Board adjourns because of Chairman's (P. D. Tandon's) arrest that day.
- 10.1.22 Motion to cancel byelaws. Consideration postponed for 6 months apparently because P. D. Tandon so desired it.
- 12.7.22 Above motion accepted by Board Committee appointed to draw up scheme to abolish absolutely the profession of prostitution.
- 28.7.22 Meanwhile some other draft amendments made to byelaws. Board appoints a fresh committee with B. Damodar Das as chairman to report whether these byelaws are "in consonance with the spirit of Municipalities Act". (This committee has not yet submitted any report).
- 8.9.22 Report of sub-committee appointed to abolish prostitution. Suggests law etc. (see).
- 11.1.23 Board resolution. Above committee has failed to carry out work entrusted to it. Prostitution still flourishes.

This is the position today. Legally the three byelaws published in the Gazette on 14.6.21 have still the force of law. The resolution of the Board cancelling byelaw 1 does not take away anything from the legal force of the byelaw. On the other hand it is very undesirable to take legal action on the basis of a byelaw which the Board itself has attempted to cancel. It is therefore necessary that the position be made clear. Either byelaw one be removed from our byelaws in the manner provided for by the law and byelaws 2 and 3 also either removed or altered, or the byelaws should be confirmed and an attempt made to enforce them. I would also point out that the resolution of the Board

dated 12.7.22 only purported to cancel byelaw 1 and did not touch byelaws 2 and 3.

A side issue has also arisen. In July 1922 one Muhammad Akabar and others sold a house in *mohalla* Chowk to a prostitute named Akhtari. The residents of the *muhalla* objected and sent in a petition demanding action under the new byelaw. Thereupon (on 6.8.22) the Executive Officer issued a notice to the vendor directing cancellation of the sale. (on 12.7.22 Board accepted motion cancelling byelaw 1 and on 28.7.22 Damodar Das Committee appointed). No further action taken. The residents of *muhalla* have also appealed to Commissioner with whom Board has been corresponding on the subject. In letter No. 5432 dated 25.4.23 Commissioner draws attention to fact that even if byelaw 1 be enforced, no prosecution can take place for a sale of house property. The byelaw only applied to the residence of public prostitutes and not to their acquiring property. Commissioner wants Board's opinion about byelaws so that he may either take steps to cancel them or the Board may enforce them.

I agree with the Commissioner's interpretation of the byelaw 1. I think it is clear that under byelaw 1 we cannot proceed against a prostitute or any other party for buying or selling house property in the prohibited area. Byelaw 2 is ambiguous on the point. The words "otherwise dispose of" would seem to include a case of sale. I feel however that it would be wrong to proceed in the courts against any party under the circumstances mentioned above. I would suggest to the Board that this matter be dropped and no steps be taken against the vendor or vendee.

I would also suggest that byelaws 1, 2 and 3 be cancelled and that the Commissioner be asked to take the necessary steps for this purpose. It will be difficult to amend them or improve them. Let us remove them entirely and then proceed with a clean slate. Some action is I think necessary. The problem is a most difficult one and cannot be solved merely by resolution. The Board can hardly frame byelaws or even amend them without a previous consideration by a committee. I know that committees on this subject have not a proud record. One of them sat on the file for many months and eventually returned it without any suggestion. Still I would suggest that a committee of three or 5 be appointed to suggest rules or byelaws and to report within a month.

I am making my suggestions as to how we should view this question on a separate sheet.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
10.6.23

## 11. On Presentation of Civic Addresses<sup>1</sup>

It has of old been the custom of municipalities and other local bodies to honour men of note who have served their city or their country and have deserved well of their fellow-countrymen by the presentation of addresses of welcome. In England the freedom of the city is usually conferred on the favoured individual. In India no such elaborate ceremonial is gone through and the local bodies content themselves merely with the presentation of an address. In pursuance of this practice a large number of Government officials have been favoured with caskets and addresses. No objection was raised to this on behalf of the Government, and the money spent thereon were gladly sanctioned. Municipal Boards were encouraged to bow down and worship before the representatives of the power that held the country. Members of the old boards, brought up in the traditions of a bygone age, accepted this state of affairs as one of the inscrutable dispensations of Providence against which it was unwise to rebel. The usual state of many boards, embarrassed with deficits or looking forward to Government loans and grants, was one of trepidation lest the Government be annoyed and *inter alia* refuse financial help. And so this process of moral collapse went on and board after board did not honour those whom it would have liked to honour and to whom the honour was due but those the Government wanted to honour. It did not honour any individual for his virtues but simply because he happened to occupy a certain post or wear a certain uniform. Honour was due to the chair of State or to the livery of office and not to the person, wise or unwise, good or bad, who happened to sit on that chair or wear that livery. This arrangement, however humiliating to the board, was entirely to the liking of the gentlemen wearing these liveries and sitting on these gilded chairs, and there was or could be no conflict between them and the board.

Latterly, however, boards have developed the inconvenient habit of thinking for themselves. They have even presumed to honour men whom the Government does not like. In our own city of Allahabad, for the first time in the history of our board, a non-official, Deshbandhu

1. *The Leader*, 29 June 1923.

On 21 May 1923 the U.P. Government informed local district and municipal bodies that funds would be sanctioned for the presentation of addresses only to the Governor-General and the Governor. Jawaharlal wrote this note for the guidance of the members of his Board.

Chittaranjan Das, was presented with an address of welcome some months ago and the board also decided to honour similarly Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib. A very petty sum of Rs. 25/- was voted for their addresses.

For years past the Government had been sanctioning without demur the considerable sums spent on caskets etc. given to Government officials. But now that the non-official has entered their preserves, their conscience has begun to trouble them. Having swallowed many camels they are now straining at a gnat. A G.O. informs me that the question of public expenditure by municipal and district boards on the presentation of addresses was referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to advise the Minister for Local Self-Government. This Committee has recommended that expenditure on addresses to other than the Governor-General or the Governor of these provinces should not be sanctioned. This recommendation has been accepted by the Governor 'acting with his Ministers'.

It is clear that Government are not much concerned with the financial side of the question. They want to put a stop to the presentation of addresses to persons they do not like and instead of acting in an honest and straightforward manner, they have adopted these tortuous and indirect methods. But the cloven hoof is apparent.

The question for the Board to consider is whether they are going to abdicate from their functions and leave it to the Government to determine whom they are going to honour and whom they must not. It is not so much a question of political opinion. Every member of the Board, whatever his opinions on wider issues may be, must jealously guard the rights and prerogatives of the Board and refuse to tolerate any interference with them. The proposal of the Government to interfere, however indirectly, with one of the established rights of the Board is an insult and impertinence. I trust the Board will agree with this view and will so inform the Government.

Jawaharlal Nehru

I am making my suggestions as to how we should view this question on a separate sheet.

I am making my suggestions as to how we should view this question on a separate sheet.

## 12. Note to Members of the Board and Heads of Departments<sup>1</sup>

I have received two important communications from the Commissioner in the course of the last few days. The first of these was the Commissioner's reply to our annual report, and this contains a brief survey of municipal activity during the past year. The second is his answer to our budget estimates for 1923-24. I have replied to both these letters, and in the ordinary course both the Commissioner's letters and my replies to them will be circulated amongst members with a host of other files, and eventually laid before the Board. It is possible that if only this procedure was followed the attention of many members may not be drawn to them. I attach some value to the correspondence, and would like every member to read it carefully. I have therefore requested the officer to circulate these letters separately to all the members, so that each one of us may have an opportunity of considering them.

2. I have already had my say in my replies, but I would like to lay special stress again on some important points brought out by the Commissioner. Unfortunately I have to rely on my memory, as I am away from Allahabad and have not got the correspondence or any other papers with me. Another piece of ill luck is my being confined to bed with fever. I would therefore crave the indulgence of members for the scrappiness of this note and perhaps for other errors of needless repetition and the like.

3. The Commissioner has laid repeated stress on the unsatisfactory condition of our finances. We owe a sum of over Rs. 6,00,000/- to Government and for some years we have not paid anything towards this loan. This year we have set aside a small sum for the purpose but this is barely a third of the amount of the annual instalments. The result is that penal interest is being charged us and our debt is gradually mounting up. Members know that a new water works organisation scheme is being considered and in another year's time we may have to raise a big loan to finance it. How will we pay the interest and the sinking charges on this new loan if we cannot cope with our present debt? It may be that we will be required to pay as much as two lakhs a year towards our loans. This will necessarily

1. 24 July 1923. A.M.B. File No. 26/VII-9 of 1923-24.

result in heavy curtailment of other expenses and perhaps the abandonment of some projects. We must therefore take stock of our assets and liabilities now and shape our course accordingly. There is a very natural desire in the minds of members to encourage the spending of money on objects of public good e.g. public health and sanitation, education, public works etc. This desire led the Board to alter considerably the recommendations of the Finance Committee in regard to our last Budget estimates. The amounts allotted to education and public health were largely increased at the expense of the sum budgeted for the repayment of our debts. We cannot afford to be magnanimous with money other than our own and the best of projects must wait if we have no funds.

4. The two ways of improving our financial condition are increasing our revenue and lessening our expenditure. I do not know what new methods we can devise for increasing our revenue. We have recently raised our octroi rates and the house and water taxes and we cannot think of any further increase at present. Indeed I am doubtful if the present octroi rates do not err on the side of being too heavy. Octroi is not a very desirable source of revenue<sup>2</sup>. It is always a nuisance and may sometimes become a serious hindrance to trade. There is already a tendency in Allahabad amongst a number of traders to adopt underhand methods in order to avoid the payment of octroi. This must of course be checked, but too high a rate of octroi will always lead to such practices. The new rates of house and water taxes are also heavy and have not made the Board very popular with the public. The only other principal source of revenue is the tax on carriages and motors etc. We are trying to get as much out of this as possible and we cannot increase it indefinitely. A new tax—the passenger tax—has been included in the budget but it has not yet been sanctioned by Government. How then are we to raise our revenue substantially? I confess I can think of no feasible method but I am a novice and perhaps older members will be able to make helpful suggestions. A source of income

2. However, octroi continues to be collected in Allahabad, and Jawaharlal, as Prime Minister, wrote to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on 23 March 1955: "I was surprised to learn that the Allahabad Municipality still charges octroi duty. I remember that more than thirty years ago when I was Chairman of the Municipality I had recommended strongly that octroi should be abolished. I am sure this is coming in the way of normal trade and development here. It might mean a loss of two or three lakhs of rupees, perhaps, for a year or two, but this would be easily made up later. I hope you will look into this matter soon."

which we are not fully utilizing at present is our sullage. I think that if we proceed in a business-like manner we might under the new water works scheme realise as much as Rs. 1,00,000/- yearly from the sale or other use of our sullage. For the present we could easily get up to Rs. 12,000 per annum for our surplus sullage. The offer made to us for the purchase of surplus sullage meant this and we could have got a substantial sum even in the current financial year.

5. We come then to retrenchment. A committee has been considering this for a considerable time. I have no idea of what they have done so far and on what lines they are working. But to my mind real retrenchment does not consist in getting rid of a number of persons in the municipal establishment. A small sum saved thus will not make much difference. Real retrenchment must aim at efficiency. An efficient staff is always cheaper in the end. I regret that the present municipal staff is not efficient. There is far too much slackness and generally people do not seem to be wide awake or swift enough. If the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee result in introducing efficiency in our various departments then they may congratulate themselves on the outcome of their labours. Efficiency will necessarily bring greater revenue and will lessen expenditure. One efficient person is worth more than any number of inefficient and to employ an incompetent or partly competent person in order to save a small sum is the worst economy.

6. In this connection I should like to say something about a wider issue. All large municipalities in India or the West have to face the problem of the division of responsibility between experts and popular representatives. Municipal administration is becoming more and more complex and the expert is gradually coming in to guide if not to control the activities of every department. Apart from matters requiring technical knowledge, it is felt that special experience is required for municipal administration and mere "common sense" is not enough. In America this has resulted in the evolution of a highly paid and a very efficient person called the "City Manager" who is the executive head of the municipality. He has very large powers but he is of course subject to the elected representatives and can be dismissed by them at any moment. The city manager and other experts are considered to be the permanent officials of the Municipality who do not, or should not, change with a change in the political complexion of the elected representatives. They are given the largest freedom and are only interfered with in matters of policy. Indeed it is impossible for any expert to function if he is constantly interfered with, often by persons who have no special knowledge of the subject. He will not feel that

he is responsible for the work entrusted to him and the pride of the artist and the specialist in him will seldom be quickened to action for the benefit of the Municipality. Under modern conditions we must have experts. If we want to utilise them to the full we must allow them a free hand and there should be as little interference as possible with their work. The ultimate direction of everything must of course remain with the elected representatives. Every expert or permanent official should know and feel that he is their servant and has to answer to them for everything that he may do. Permanent officials who are not under popular control, as we know to our cost, are a danger against which we must guard. They are too wooden, and utterly out of touch with the people, and have no sense of proportion or vision. They always tend to make a close corporation of themselves, indulge in mutual praise and are wholly intolerant of people who differ from them. This cannot be permitted but the elected representatives can well have full control over their servants and yet allow them a great deal of liberty.

7. We should introduce the element of responsibility and make the head of each department fully responsible for every sin of omission or commission of each clerk under him. We can only do so if we allow him considerable freedom. We cannot thrust inefficient men into his office and then hold him responsible for their misconduct. I therefore am of opinion that members of the Board as such should seldom think of any appointments. Since I have become Chairman I have received a vast number of applications for municipal appointments but so far as I can remember, I have not recommended even one of them to our permanent officers lest my recommendation be considered almost an order and be acted upon accordingly. If even so any incompetent person is employed I think I shall be perfectly justified in holding the permanent officer who employed him responsible for his inefficiency or misdeeds. I should like to make it quite clear that the one excuse I do not wish to hear from any head of department is that his subordinates are incompetent. If any person is incompetent he must be removed regardless of personal considerations.

8. Effective retrenchment will mean for us that no new project should be taken in hand which involves heavy expenditure of our money. I have heard light-hearted suggestions that Government will give us a loan for this and a grant for that. I am afraid I dislike the idea of continually appealing to Government for help. But even if Government gave us a loan it will mean an additional burden on us. The only loan that we should have in view is the Water Works loan and on no other account should we approach Government for a loan however tempting the project may be.

9. The Commissioner refers to the adulteration of food and suggests that we should bestir ourselves in the matter and take more action against offenders than we did last year. Last year's figures are certainly not promising and I hope the Health Department will show better results this year. In this matter members can be of great help by bringing cases of adulteration etc. to the notice of the Health Officer. The suggestion that our laboratory might be used for detecting adulteration is worthy of consideration. Perhaps at present it has not got the necessary apparatus. This might be purchased if it is not too expensive.

10. The Commissioner has called our attention to the terrible infant mortality. The figures are indeed appalling. This is one of the matters we must provide for even though the best of our schemes and projects suffer. The Board has already appointed a committee to report. I feel that our present system of keeping *dais* is worse than useless. They are not properly trained and there is no proper supervision. In any event they should go. We should replace them with something that is more reliable.

11. Another matter to which the Commissioner has referred is the disposal of sullage. It is most unfortunate that after two years or so of negotiations and discussions we have returned to our starting point and have to start afresh. The question of loss of money, which we might realise immediately by the sale of the sullage, is important enough in the present state of our finances. But far more vital is the stoppage of the flow of the surplus sullage into the river near the *Sangam*. I feel, and I am sure that members will agree with me, that it would be a crime to do any thing which might result in an epidemic amongst the vast crowds that bathe in the *Sangam*. I had hoped that we could divert all our sullage and prevent it from going into the river before the *Kumbh Mela* which takes place next January. We have little time left for this now but I hope we shall yet succeed. I earnestly hope that the Committee which is considering this question will suggest a way out of the impasse.

12. There is another matter about which I should like to say something although the Commissioner has not referred to it—the purity of our water supply. Complaints have been made of this for some time past. I do not think there is any cause for alarm but I do think that there is considerable room for improvement. I am glad that all hydrants and scours are being raised. I hope the grouting of the second reservoir will also be taken in hand as early as practicable. All other methods of improving the supply should be explored and tried. The

excuse of want of funds should not be put forward. I am sure that the Board will not grudge money for this purpose.

I have written at unconscionable length. I hope my colleagues, if they take the trouble to read through this note, will not think me too officious or resent my troubling them even when I am absent from Allahabad.

Naini Tal

July 24th 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

### 13. On Municipal Work during June-August 1923<sup>1</sup>

Three months ago, I issued a short note on the work we had done in April and May. That note was largely taken up with complaints and fault-finding. Since then, three months of hard work and earnest endeavour have gone by and today I have a far more agreeable task before me. I have gratefully to record the good work done by the chairmen of the committees, heads of departments and most of the members of the Board. If I have to find fault with anyone, it is the Chairman of the Board. I have been absent from Allahabad for lengthy periods and the burden of my work has fallen on other shoulders. I am grateful to Mr. Zahur Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, the Senior Vice-Chairman, for having shouldered this burden. In his absence, it fell to Mr. N. K. Mukerji, the Junior Vice-Chairman, to add the Chairman's functions to his multifarious municipal duties. He has taken upon himself so many of my duties that I sometimes wonder how I could carry on without his help.

1. *The Allahabad Municipal Gazette Extraordinary*, 15 September 1923. Extracts.

2. A barrister of Allahabad and Senior Vice-Chairman, A.M.B. in 1923.

2. During the last three months, there were 26 meetings of the Board. The total number of meetings held during the last five months—since the new Board was formed—is 45. This works out at the heavy rate of 9 meetings per month, which is about double the last year's average. The work of the Board has greatly increased and has a tendency to go on increasing. I am glad to say that we are up-to-date in our work and there are no arrears, so far as board meetings are concerned....

9. Another matter connected with the water supply which has repeatedly come before the Board is the question of the disposal of surplus sullage. There appears to be some fatality which delays the solution of this problem and meanwhile we are losing good money and tolerating a very insanitary state of affairs. The *Kumbh Mela* is approaching and I very much fear that we cannot effectively control the sullage before that date....

13. I have received monthly reports from most departments. The one notable exception is the Building Department. In spite of repeated efforts, I have failed to elicit any kind of a report from this department during the past five months. The department is the greatest sinner so far as arrears are concerned and complaints are frequent. I hope that under its new and energetic Chairman, Mr. I. E. Gilbert<sup>3</sup>, this chronic state of delay and dilatoriness will disappear. I find from copies of proceedings that the members of the Building Committee are not taking much interest in their work. On two recent occasions, meetings could not be held for want of a quorum. At the adjourned meetings only Mr. Gilbert was present and, naturally, the work was done expeditiously and without a single dissentient....

15. The Education Committee held 13 meetings during the three months. In one of their earliest reports, I was informed that the Committee was evolving a curriculum on national lines. I shall await the result of their labours. They have introduced the Boy Scout movement in their schools and have just reported to the Board on the scheme of compulsory education. They have wisely suggested an increase in the salaries of the teachers to be appointed under this scheme. According to the Government scheme, the minimum salary is, I think, the miserable pittance of Rs. 14/- per month. I think that it is little short of scandalous that a teacher of our youth should be paid at that rate. The Committee has also introduced some national holidays in

3. Member, A.M.B., 1924-29.

their schools. I congratulate them specially on making the singing of Iqbal's<sup>4</sup> *Hindustan Hamara* a part of their school curriculum. Altogether, the Committee have done a good quarter's work with which they have reason to be satisfied.

16. The Public Works Committee only met 5 times during the 3 months. They have to face difficult problems which require ceaseless attention and I would suggest more frequent meetings. It is said that the Municipal Engineer has too much office work to do and has little time left for other important work. I think the complaint is partly justified. In future, however, I hope that he will have more time for other work as he has now been relieved of the heavy charge of part of the Water Works System. I am further informed that the office is in an unsatisfactory condition owing to the absence of the Head Clerk on sick leave. This is a feeble excuse. I hope the Executive Officer and Municipal Engineer will immediately see to it that proper arrangements are made to make the office efficient and up-to-date. It is unfortunate that a Head Clerk should fall ill, but it is still more unfortunate that we should be incapable of carrying on the work properly in his absence....

20. I have been shocked to see some of the roads, or rather apologies for roads, round about the city. Complaints are sometimes made about the condition of the roads in the Civil Station but few people ever hear or know about the roads in and round the city. The residents of the city are long suffering and not very vociferous. A humble petition for the metalling of a road is met with the stock answer of no funds and when the question of road repairs and renewals is considered, it is natural to think only of the metalled roads in the Civil Station and to forget that thousands have not even a decent *kutcha* road leading to their houses. In some places it is difficult to get any medical advice as no vehicles can safely go there and doctors refuse to walk the distance specially when this will involve wallowing in the mud. I think the Board has been sadly failing in its duty in its neglect of the city roads. Most of the people live in the city and by far the greatest amount of money is realised from them. And yet they derive the least advantage from it. Their money goes to improve and beautify the Civil Station. The Civil Station of Allahabad deserves to be

4. Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938); a well-known Indian poet who wrote chiefly in Persian and Urdu. His poems had a great influence on his countrymen.

improved and kept up to the mark, but let us not forget that its residents are getting far more than they pay for; they are taking advantage of the taxes paid by the residents of the city.

21. I think that immediate attention should be paid to the metalling of a road leading to Atala and the road which goes to the brick-kilns. Atala and Gangaganj indeed are sinks of filth and dirt. I am told that any satisfactory scheme of sanitation and drainage would require a lakh or more as the land is low and forms a kind of cup. If this scheme has to be delayed, I hope that something will be done in the immediate future to get rid of the present horror.

22. The Mechanical Plant Committee<sup>5</sup> held 6 meetings during the three months, besides two which could not be held for want of a quorum, only the Chairman being present. I have already referred to the work of this department under another head. Complaint is made of the inefficiency of the firemen. It is no good complaining. Steps should be taken to replace the inefficient with more competent men even though this may involve a higher rate of pay....

26. A curious question of interpretation affecting a wider issue has arisen. Foreign goods coming from across the seas are charged octroi on the invoice. Indian goods are to be charged at the "market" rate whatever that may be. If this "market" rate is held to be the retail market rate, this is obviously higher than the invoice rate and the result is that Indian goods are actually penalised by being charged at a higher rate than foreign goods. This is a most undesirable result and yet this is the practice that is being followed at present. The matter is going up before the Board soon for their authoritative interpretation. Personally, I would urge that byelaws be framed empowering the Board to encourage Indian manufacturers by charging a heavier rate on foreign goods. Meanwhile, I hope at least that the Board will put an end forthwith to the present practice of protecting foreign goods.

27. The Chairman of the Town Improvement Committee is an ambitious person. He dreams of Allahabad as it should be fifty years hence. I envy him his dreams but not his powerlessness to realise them. To look far ahead is the only correct way of trying to improve a great city rationally and artistically. Unhappily, we have neither funds nor men to take up this work in earnest. Our engineers have

5. This Committee was formed to look after the water works, the drainage pumping station and tubewells.

hardly the time for extensive schemes of town improvement. The Committee has, therefore, to confine its activities to petty projects like the construction of public baths and the like. They are also trying to induce some generous minded citizen of Allahabad to build a theatre which might be used as a public hall. They recommended to the Improvement Trust that the area known as Minapur in Yahiapur and the land approached through Allahbande's Phatak near Chauk might well be taken in hand for improvement. The Trust does not view these suggestions with favour. They are too full of their own vast schemes to be able to think of smaller matters. Both Minapur and Allahbande's Phatak are inexpensive areas which can easily be acquired and converted into garden spots with, in the latter case, some good shops or houses which would pay handsomely. Another matter which has engaged the attention of the Committee is that sink of filth and rubbish in Shahganj known euphemistically as the "Phool" tank.

28. An important matter which should engage the attention of both the Building and the Town Improvement Committees is the construction of new houses on important streets like Johnstonganj. At present low and ugly and altogether disreputable structures are being built on this noble road which could have been made a sight worth seeing. I think we should have byelaws laying down definitely that only a certain style of houses will be permitted in these streets. The Board has also moved in the right direction by directing that applications for construction in congested areas should also be considered by the Town Improvement Committee....

31. I have been repeatedly approached by the *Ekkawalas* of Allahabad with a list of grievances. I think their complaints are largely justified and deserve every consideration. I am informed that during the last three months or so about 1,400 prosecutions of *Ekkawalas* were launched by the police. This is a stupendous figure and clearly indicates that something is very wrong somewhere. No rule or byelaw which requires so many prosecutions for its enforcement can be wholly good. The Municipality is not directly concerned in the prosecutions; that is the business of the police. But we must try to make the existence of *Ekkawalas* more tolerable. Their immediate grievance, apart from the number and frequency of prosecutions, is the want of a stand in Pasarhatta near the Chauk. Some months ago, a number of *Ekkas* were permitted to stand in this place, but the remedy was worse than the disease and the shop-keepers suffered a lot. I think that it is not desirable for us to have an *Ekka* stand there. We are trying our best to meet the difficulties of the *Ekkawalas* and hope to succeed partly at least.

32. In conclusion, I have only to say that I am very grateful to the officers and employees of the Board for the unvarying courtesy and indulgence they have shown to me.

Delhi,

September 13, 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

**14. Message from Nabha Jail<sup>1</sup>**

Dear Vyas<sup>2</sup>, — What I expected for long has come to pass but I confess that it took me by surprise when it did happen. I came here on a peaceful mission of enquiry for a couple of days and did not imagine that anything untoward would happen. However, I was arrested at Jaito on the 21st. I tried to wire to you so that you might inform the Board immediately, but I have not been allowed to do so. We are now permitted to write letters and I take this opportunity of sending through you a message for the Board.

Two cases have been going on against us and I have no idea when they will end or what their result will be. In all likelihood, I am going to remain in Nabha territory for sometime as a guest of the present administration. I have no doubt that the Board will take the necessary steps to prevent my continued absence from affecting our work. You know that on two occasions I offered to resign from the Chairmanship, but on the advice of friends, I refrained from doing so. The period of my Chairmanship has now been somewhat suddenly interrupted, or may be ended.

I stood as a candidate for the Municipal Board six months ago much against my will and with a dislike of the usual municipal work. I did so morally because my friends and co-workers insisted on my standing. After my election there was no question of my becoming Chairman, but at the last moment, owing to various causes known to members, a principal reason being Tandon's refusal to accept it, I was pitch-forked into the Chairmanship. I dreaded this office owing to my ignorance of municipal work and my other preoccupations.

1. 26 September 1923. *The Leader*, 6 October 1923.

2. Braj Mohan Vyas, Executive Officer of the A.M.B.

Looking back over the past five or six months, I found that my outlook on municipal matters has largely changed. What I feared and disliked I have begun to like, and municipal work has begun to have some fascination for me. I feel that it is in the power of our Board to make life a little more bearable, a little less painful to the inhabitants of Allahabad. This is worthwhile work. But to me, in spite of my new liking for it, it is only secondary work. My real passion, as I have repeatedly informed the Board, lies in a different direction, and, God willing, I shall go that way till our purpose is attained.

What is, then, liking for municipal work in me due to? I have thought over this question and I have had only one answer. The Allahabad Municipal Board must have had many abler and better chairmen than I have been or can hope to be. But of one thing I am sure. No previous chairman could have had a better atmosphere to work in or more friendly cooperation from all members and officials of the Board. I cannot express my gratitude sufficiently to the members for their consistent and continued kindness to me. I am afraid, I am a very weak mortal making mistakes frequently and sometimes using harsh words. Members on whom I had no claim of previous friendship or old acquaintance, as well as members opposed to me in political and other matters, have offered to me their whole-hearted cooperation and have shown me every indulgence. It is this cooperation and indulgence that has made my path easy and made me attached to my work at the Board.

I am also grateful to the officers and employees of the Board for their uniform courtesy and help. To you and Mr. Tamini<sup>3</sup>, I am deeply beholden. I do not know how I could have carried on my work without the daily assistance which both of you most ungrudgingly gave me.

In my last quarterly report I have indicated my ideas on some of the questions before the Board now. I am out of the heat and bustle of public activity for a while. I return, not without some satisfaction, to the seclusion where outside news seldom comes to disturb one's peace of mind or interfere with the quiet routine of the day. In this seclusion my thoughts will often go to the Municipal Board of Allahabad and its members and officers and I shall wish with all my heart that their labours may result in bringing some sunshine in the delinquent hearts of the poor in Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Prem Kishan Tamini was the Assistant Secretary of the A.M.B.

15. On a Reception to Lord Reading<sup>1</sup>

I shall be obliged if you will kindly place the following lines before the meeting of the Board which is to be held today at 5 p.m. :—

I deeply regret that owing to physical incapacity I am again prevented from attending the meeting of the Board today. I would have particularly liked to attend this meeting as a resolution involving an important principle is being proposed. I feel, however, that in spite of my ill health, I should place my views in regard to this resolution before the Board for their consideration.

I feel that a public reception to the Viceroy is a shameful thing for anyone to whom the honour of India is dear and precious. I wish no personal courtesy to Lord Reading. None of us wish him any dis-courtesy. But we are human, with eyes to see and often weep, and ears to hear, and hearts to feel, and feel the more because our arms are weak and there is no strength in us to stand upright and protect our own. Two and a half years of suffering the country has endured under Lord Reading's Viceroyalty and the noblest in the land lies in jail today. And now Lord Reading's Government in the arrogance of power have started a crusade against a brave and gallant people whose chief sin in the past has been a too great loyalty to the British Government. Their highest and their bravest have been arrested, and are being arrested by the hundred. Every Sikh with a black turban is being hunted down and fearing an exposure of their dark methods, the Government have gagged the press.

Is it this that we are asked to celebrate? Are these the brave deeds for which we wish to honour Lord Reading? I can be no party to this infamy. I cannot participate in these festivities when my heart is full and my eyes brim over at the thought of the persecution of these brave people by Lord Reading and his colleagues. I must dissociate myself utterly from all such celebrations.

Lord Reading, secure in his strength and proud of his might, has flung the challenge to the Sikhs and the Indian people. And he would have us applaud him for it, and thus complete our degradation. I am weak and powerless but I too have a little pride — the pride of the weak perhaps it may be. And I would sooner be trampled by Lord Reading's soldiery and ground to dust, rather than bow down to welcome a person who was responsible for so much sorrow to my country and countrymen.

Jawaharlal Nehru

**16. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax<sup>1</sup>**

No. 688-2/XII-2

Allahabad  
13 November, 1923

Sir,

With reference to G.O. No. 2740/XI-595-E, dated October 12, 1923, received with your office endorsement no. 4487/XXIII-183, dated October 23, 1923, I beg to inform you that the municipal board have accepted the enhanced rate of commission demanded by the Bengal and North-Western Railway viz. 3 per cent. subject to a minimum of Rs. 1,800 per annum. As regards the figures of collections through each of the three railways, it is very difficult to give any accurate estimate but the rough figures are—

	Rs.
East Indian Railway .. ..	15,000
Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway .. ..	7,500
Bengal and North-Western Railway .. ..	7,500

2. The board are anxious that early orders may be passed so that the tax may be introduced *before the next Adh Kumbhi fair*. I would therefore request you to move the Government to have the tax sanctioned by the Government of India without delay. In the present state of their finances the board cannot afford to lose the substantial addition to their income which they hope to get if the tax is sanctioned and introduced before the fair commences.

I enclose herewith a copy of board's resolution.

Yours, etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman, Municipal Board,  
Allahabad

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department File No. 595-E, April 1927. Passenger Tax, Allahabad Municipality No. 13(a), 13(b).

*Copy of board's resolution no. 535, dated November 12, 1923.*

The Government letter No. 2740, dated October 12, 1923, forwarding a copy of a letter from the Agent, Bengal and North-Western Railway, demanding enhanced rate of commission for collecting the passengers tax was considered. It was resolved that the rate now demanded by the railway, viz. 3 per cent. subject to the minimum of Rs. 1,800 per annum be accepted and that the figures of collections through each railway as estimated by the executive officer be communicated to the Government.

The board further resolved that a special request be made to the Government to have the tax sanctioned by the Government of India before the commencement of the *Adh Kumbhi fair*.

#### **17. On Municipal Work during September-November 1923<sup>1</sup>**

My review of the work done by the various departments of the Municipal Board during the last quarter is, I regret to say, little based on personal knowledge or personal association. I have been guilty of long periods of absence from Allahabad and various causes, some of which were beyond my control, have resulted in my being kept away almost continuously from my municipal duties. A stay at Delhi for the Congress was followed by an involuntary stay at Nabha, and soon after came a somewhat protracted illness<sup>2</sup>. Even after that I had to spend much of my time at Amritsar. It is only by the indulgence of my colleagues on the Board and by their constant readiness to shoulder the burden that should rightly be mine, that I am continuing as Chairman of the Board. But it would be more in the fitness of things if some other person who would be something more than a ceremonial Chairman, could take charge of the office I have the honour to hold today....

11. The Education Committee held 5 meetings during the period under report. Besides these, two unfortunately could not be held for

1. 17 December 1923. *The Allahabad Municipal Gazette Extraordinary*, Part IV, 21 December 1923. Extracts.
2. On his release from Nabha, Jawaharlal fell ill with a severe attack of typhoid.

want of a quorum. Their chief work has been the preparation of the compulsory education scheme. This has been passed by the Board and sent on to Government. Spinning wheels have been distributed in all girls' schools and lessons in spinning and carding given. I trust that spinning will be taught in a business-like way by experts and special attention is paid to the care and repair of the *charkha*. I am very glad to find that the boys are taking to scouting and both boys and girls have to drill. I hope that this will be persisted in. The Chairman of the committee informs me that special stress is being laid on health and sanitation and on habits of cleanliness. An admirable feature is a special day's outing every month for nature study and for developing the powers of observation of the children. The Chairman<sup>3</sup> makes a point of meeting all the head teachers every month and discussing with them their difficulties and suggesting improvements. She commends the efforts of teachers to improve the schools and specially mentions in this connection the headmistress of the Daraganj Girls' School.

12. Altogether, the report of the Education Department is an encouraging document. It is clear that attempts, which are not unsuccessful, are being made to infuse life in our schools and to lessen the deadening effect of education on a large scale. At the various prize distributions of the municipal schools and especially at the ceremony of the presentation of an address of welcome to Maulana Shaukat Ali by the Board, the boys and girls from our schools presented a cheering sight. Perhaps the best compliment to our schools is the fact that the children of many wealthy persons, who could afford to send them elsewhere, come to them. But satisfactory as all this is, we are faced by the urgent need for economy and even our education budget may have to suffer for want of funds.

13. The Public Works Department have sent no report for November. In September and October the committee held five meetings. The chief evidence of the department's activity, so far as the public is concerned, is the construction of the Johnstonganj sewer. A great part of this important thoroughfare has been dug up to the great inconvenience of every one who passes by. I trust the work will be over soon. It will bring great relief to the residents of Johnstonganj. Another evidence of the department's activity is an unsightly structure put up on the Stanley Road side of the Purushottamdas Park. This is meant

3. Shrimati Uma Nehru, wife of Shamlal Nehru, a cousin of Jawaharlal.

to be a *mali's* residence but why a *mali* should necessarily live in a structure which is most unpleasing to the eye, is not at all clear. Some of us are waiting with some trepidation, for the Public Works Department apparently does not believe much in combining beauty with utility, for the fountain to appear in the park....

21. Every month, with unfailing regularity, complaint is made by the Mechanical Plants Department of the menial staff in the Water Works and the firemen are especially said to be inefficient. It is extraordinary how this complaint continues to be made and yet no steps are taken to remove the inefficient and put better men in their place. I hope the committee will see to this. I am told that the engineering staff is efficient but is "slack" in sending reports. They "fight shy of pen and paper". I am afraid the staff will have to get over this aversion to pen and paper. Any slackness of this kind is most objectionable and is own brother to incompetence. It is impossible for a person who is slack to be efficient and I desire no slackness in the municipal employee. I hope the Mechanical Plants Committee will rigidly enforce the rule of periodical reports. I hope also that the committee will soon discard its present name and be called by the homelier name of the Water Works Committee.

22. The Public Health Committee held 8 meetings and 2 could not be held for want of a quorum. In the report for September, the promising statement was made that "slackers and undesirables" were being replaced wholesale. No further reference is made to this in the October or the November report. The omission is strange. Complaints continue to be made of the non-removal of filth and rubbish from places where it has been collected. The west section of Ward III is apparently the worst sufferer. This is an evil of long standing and I would suggest to the Public Health Committee to concentrate on this and make suitable arrangements for the speedy removal of all rubbish. Probably the most important duty of a municipality is to keep the city clean and it is most unbecoming for our Board to fail to come up to the mark in this respect. Perhaps the provision of dustbins in the congested parts of the city would go some way in helping to ease the situation. The contractor for rubbish removal for Ward I (Civil Station) did not do his work properly and has been replaced by another....

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

**18. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax<sup>1</sup>**

No. 755-2/XII-2,

Allahabad

January 8, 1924

Sir,

With reference to your telegram and letter no. 18-CH., dated January 5, 1924, communicating the sanction of the Government of India to the imposition of the passengers' tax, I have the honour to inform you that the municipal board passed a special resolution on January 7, 1924 directing the imposition of the tax with effect from January 15, 1924. I have already sent you a wire on the subject and I am now enclosing a copy of the resolution as required by section 135(1) of the Municipalities Act. I hope that the necessary notification will be published in the next Gazette.

Yours, etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

*Copy of board's special resolution No. 642, dated January 7, 1923.*

The Government telegram intimating that the tax on passengers has been sanctioned by the Governor General in Council was read.

Resolved that the passengers' tax be imposed with effect from January 15, 1924, and that the Government be informed accordingly.

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department, April 1927; File No. 595-E Passenger tax, Allahabad Municipality No. 18 and 18(a). Imposition of the tax was notified by the Government, vide Notification No. 55/XI-595 E, Municipal Department, 10 January 1924; it was imposed for a period of two years, with effect from 15 January 1924.

19. Statement at a Meeting of the Board<sup>1</sup>

I have taken the liberty of convening an emergent meeting as a serious situation arose yesterday at the *Kumbh Mela* owing to restrictions placed on bathing in the *Sangam*. Members of the Board are aware that the Municipal Board has no voice in the management of the *mela*. The Board is indeed treated with scant courtesy in regard to the *mela*. Nonetheless the Board cannot remain a passive and a silent spectator when the feelings of a large number of the residents of Allahabad are deeply hurt. The Ganges has this year taken a somewhat different course and the current is so strong near the *Sangam* that it is undoubtedly dangerous for people to bathe there without proper precautions. Little attempt was at first made to prepare a suitable bathing place near the *Sangam* but eventually on repeated request being made the Government made a special grant for the purpose and a host of volunteers prepared such a place where a limited number of persons could bathe in safety. The District authorities however refused all access to the *Sangam*. Every effort was made to make them agree to a small number of persons going in with proper precautions but they refused. A desire to prevent an accident or loss of life is most commendable and must appeal to everyone. The original plan of the authorities might have been based on this desire but I must say with regret that their attitude yesterday was entirely based on obstinacy and notions of prestige. They were prepared to allow even large numbers of persons to bathe in the *Sangam* but not those who had presumed to insist on bathing there unless they withdrew themselves and thus perhaps showed repentance for their temerity. The question of danger receded into the background and the whole issue became one of prestige. Danger can be discussed and overcome, prestige cannot. The result of this was a disobedience of the orders of the district authorities by a number of persons. It is most regrettable that a religious function should be marred by an exhibition of passion and conflict. I feel however that the blame must rest with the authorities who deliberately took a course which they must have known or should have known would result in deep annoyance to Hindus. They took little pains to begin with to prepare a suitable bathing *ghat* near the *Sangam*. When a small *ghat* was prepared and

could be used with safety they would not allow even limited numbers to go to it with all necessary precautions. Their attitude was as wooden and wanting in reason as it could well be. There was little hint in it of a regard for Hindu feelings and susceptibilities. They have demonstrated that they have not the fitness to deal with the *mela*.

Yesterday is over with its obstinacy and folly, but the *mela* continues and it is for the Board to determine what steps, if any, it should take in the matter so that the pilgrims who come from afar may bathe in safety and yet may, as far as possible, be permitted to bathe according to their religious beliefs.

I would add just a few words. I must say that the behaviour of the police, officers and men, was commendable yesterday. Except in an individual case or two they behaved with courtesy and restraint.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
15-1-24

**20. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding the Use of the Word 'Vernacular'**<sup>1</sup>

28. 1. 24

Sir,

The following resolution was passed by the Board on the 16th January:

Resolved that wherever the word 'vernacular' occurs in the byelaws and regulations of the Board it be replaced by the word 'Hindustani'.

Resolved further that Government be requested to replace the word 'vernacular' by the word 'Hindustani' in the Municipal Act and the rules made thereunder.

It was felt by the Board that it was not desirable to use the word 'vernacular' for 'Hindustani' as the ordinary use of that word is for the vulgar tongue or the *patois* and not for a literary language. Hindustani, either Hindi or Urdu, have literatures of their own and it would be incorrect to refer to them ordinarily as vernaculars. Another reason

1. A.M.B. File No. 44/XII-3 of 1924.

for the suggested change is the fact that 'vernacular' might mean any of the provincial languages in India. It is desirable to specify the particular language and in our province there can be little doubt that this language is Hindustani.

I trust that Government will see its way to change the word 'vernacular' to 'Hindustani' in the Municipal Act and the rules made thereunder.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**21. Note on Municipal work during December 1923 and January -February 1924<sup>1</sup>**

5. The Municipal year is drawing to a close and the annual report will soon have to be prepared. I do not therefore at this stage, wish to discuss in any detail the work of the various departments and Standing Committees. A great part of their energies has latterly been taken up by the preparation of their budget for the coming year. In preparing this they were told to exercise the strictest economy and several departments, I am glad to say, responded to this appeal. The Water Works Department has considerably cut down its expenditure and so has the Education Department. The latter has amalgamated several schools and thus reduced the total number of schools. I trust this will be conducive to greater efficiency and will not deprive any children of the advantage of attending Municipal Schools. It is distressing even to appear to reduce the arrangements for education. I have felt that the physical and mental development of the young should be the special care of the state and the Municipality and in this respect we might well take a leaf out of the book of Soviet Russia. But the time for this is not yet and before we venture to take up ambitious schemes of education we must improve the sanitary and kindred services of Allahabad. The very first charge on the Board is to make of Allahabad a clean and healthy city with proper roads, water supply etc. This does not necessarily mean the starving of education and I hope that under the new

1. 31 March 1924. *The Allahabad Municipal Gazette*, 1 April 1924. Extracts.

arrangements a better system based on nationalistic principles will be introduced....

7. The problem of the upkeep of roads is intimately connected with another feature of Allahabad. Every visitor to Allahabad must notice the large compounds attached to bungalows. Most of these are not properly looked after and present a deserted appearance. It has become difficult for people here to keep large compounds in proper condition. The obvious remedy is that large compounds should not be encouraged. As it is Allahabad is quite spread out enough and scores of miles of road have to be kept in repair, watered, cleaned, lighted, etc. Schemes of Town Improvement, now being hatched in the Improvement Trust Office, would spread out Allahabad even more and increase the burden of the Board. What is required is that the present Civil Station of Allahabad should be more built up and the compounds attached to houses should become smaller and better looked after. The income of the Board would go up and the general appearance of Allahabad would also improve. Large compounds should be penalised for this purpose, either on the basis of area or road frontage....

9. The various committees to consider matters relating to the octroi have not yet finished their labours. It is being daily impressed upon me that the present octroi rates are strangling the trade of Allahabad. It is the height of unwise to kill the trade of Allahabad in order to realise a little more for municipal needs. I am anxiously awaiting the reports of the committees and I hope they will tackle the problem bravely and root out the evils of the present system.

10. Another matter which has been repeatedly brought to my notice is the dissatisfaction felt against the new assessment. I do not think the fault lies with the assessment. The rate of taxation is high, specially the water rate. This rate was not felt much when the assessment was low but as soon as the new assessment was made the pinch was felt. There was some difficulty in realising taxes, arrears accumulated, and eventually some stringent measures were taken to realise them. Money came in then but I must confess to a feeling of utter dislike to these methods of realising taxation. Individual cases have come to my notice when great hardship was caused by the procedure of the Tax Department. Indeed the Tax Department is not too full of the milk of human kindness and appears to rely too much on the strong arm of the law. The methods of a bully are not the only ways of realising taxation and a too frequent resort to them will defeat the end in view.

I feel that the real trouble however is due to the incidence of taxation and I would respectfully suggest to the Board in all earnestness to consider this question without delay. I know our financial difficulties and the many useful works that stand in need of money. But no consideration should make us go beyond certain limits. If life becomes too much of a burden in Allahabad, the Board will be the greatest sufferer in the end....

13. The Improvement Trust has lately drawn considerable attention. That is well, but I wish that the many critics and the few admirers of the Trusts might know more of the facts and might then place these facts before the public. The Trust dislikes publicity, it hates the light of day. It is even afraid of the Government prying too closely into its affairs or knowing too much of its mysterious ways. In the last six months or so a Sub-committee of the Trust has been considering the question of retrenchment. This committee by a majority of three to one recommended, *inter alia*, that the Chairman should be honorary, that there should be only one Chief Engineer for the three Trusts and various other retrenchments. After many delays the matter was considered by the Trust. The consideration of the main recommendations however has been postponed. A proposal that the Government be informed that the Retrenchment Committee had recommended that the Chairman be honorary was defeated by the Chairman himself casting two votes against it — an excess of zeal for a worthy cause. Thus the Trust would not even agree to inform the Government of its proceedings and wants to delay the consideration of these matters so that the decision may be taken too late....

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

## 22. On the Allahabad Octroi Committee<sup>1</sup>

Sir, — I have seen a communication in the *Leader* of the 19th April purporting to be a report of a public meeting held on the 17th to consider certain octroi matters. The 'report' is an entirely fanciful picture of what happened. Indeed it is a report of much that did not happen.

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 21 April 1924.

I was asked to attend the meeting to explain the action being taken by the Board in regard to the removal of certain disabilities and difficulties. I welcomed the opportunity and took advantage of it to explain at some length the Board's position. I further informed the people present that the action of a very few gentlemen two days before in preventing members of the octroi committee from going to the octroi office was improper and in no sense Satyagraha as it had been miscalled. Satyagraha was a noble thing and it had nothing to do with the action referred to. There was no reference whatever to the *Sangam* or Nabha unless the sender of the communication to you whispered it in his neighbour's ears. After explaining the position of the Board I left or rather endeavoured to leave. As I was leaving I noticed that several persons were talking at the same time. I returned and advised the conveners of the meeting to end the meeting as a full discussion had already taken place and a decision by a show of hands at that stage when people were somewhat excited, would not be helpful. The conveners were good enough to accept my advice and the meeting dispersed. Nothing further was said.

I may add that I have received a large number of representations from traders expressing their confidence in Thakur Parmatma Nand Singh, chairman of the Octroi Committee. Mr. Singh was and is desirous of not continuing as chairman of the committee, but it was because of my recommendation that he consented to continue as such. The responsibility is entirely mine.

Jawaharlal Nehru

April 18.

### 23. From the Annual Administration Report for 1923-24<sup>1</sup>

Sir,

2. I regret that there has been some delay in sending this report. I am to blame for this. For over a month I have occupied a somewhat anomalous position and have daily looked forward to being relieved of

1. 30 May 1924. A.M.B. Records, 1924. Extracts.

the honourable but nonetheless onerous burden of the Chairmanship of the Board. My resignation was sent to Government in the middle of April but I have received no reply so far. This state of uncertainty was not helpful in writing a report which might not perhaps find favour with my successor in office.

3. My last report was written soon after I joined the Board, fresh from other forms of activity but wholly ignorant of municipal administration. I can speak with a little experience now though I shall not presume to imagine that I know much even now of municipal affairs, or to measure my little knowledge with the wisdom of others. And experience has shown me, and perhaps many of my colleagues also, that municipal work is not an unmixed joy. The past year has been one of fairly hard work for most people connected with the Board. A glance at the list of Board meetings and committee meetings will show that the spirit, at any rate, has been very willing. How far this work has borne fruit, it is difficult to say, but the problems of municipal administration are not easy of quick solution. The Board has faced these problems boldly and has not shirked or shelved any of them and I trust that their year's labours have resulted in bringing Allahabad a little nearer to what it should be.

4. The Board as constituted after the general elections in 1923, had a majority of Congressmen in it who had sought election, as stated in the last report, on the ground that they would endeavour to carry on municipal administration on nationalistic lines and where possible to help the nation-building programme of the Congress. Most of the work of the Board has little to do with larger national issues but the manner of doing it varies, and it has been the endeavour of the Board during the year under report to introduce, whenever possible, this spirit of nationalism. In this endeavour, members, even of different shades of political opinion, have cooperated to a remarkable degree. Among the principal outward expressions of this spirit of nationalism have been the organisation of spinning and scouting in municipal schools as well as a definite attempt to develop the patriotism of the boys and girls there. The Board has laid stress on the use of *khaddar* and most of the employees and the teachers and boys and girls are now clad in the national dress. An endeavour has also been made, though progress is not as rapid as it might be, in making Hindustani, both in the Urdu and the Hindi scripts, the medium for the Board's work. As it is, Hindustani is almost always used in the Board's meetings except by members who do not know it well enough. Much of the correspondence is carried on in Hindustani. The result of this has been greater interest on the part of the public and also sometimes greater criticism. But criticism based

on knowledge will always be helpful and I hope that soon Hindustani will take pride of place as it should in this country and even our non-Indian colleagues will use the language of the country they have made their second home.

5. Among the minor changes introduced by the Board indicative of the new spirit referred to above have been the addition of the Tilak Day, the 1st August, the death anniversary of the late Lokamanya, and the 18th March, the Gandhi Day, when our revered leader Mahatma Gandhi was sentenced, to the list of holidays. The Empire Day has been omitted from the list of holidays. Maulana Shaukat Ali came to Allahabad early in December and received a cordial address of welcome from the Board. He inspected the boys and girls in the municipal schools. Mahatma Gandhi's discharge from jail early in February was celebrated by the Board by the illumination of municipal buildings. During the year the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited Allahabad. The Board passed a resolution that they did not participate in the welcome to him....

15. It has become customary for almost all Municipal Boards in these provinces, if not elsewhere, to bemoan annually their financial position, and for Government to lay stress on financial reform. Allahabad has had its share of criticism and the Board fully realises that the first necessity of municipal administration is financial equilibrium. Efforts have been made to bring this about and I am glad to say that we have largely succeeded. The Board can derive some satisfaction from the fact that its financial position now, though demanding every attention, is not such as to cause any anxiety. There was a substantial surplus at the end of the year and we held a large balance. We have increased our reserve fund from Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 25,000/- We paid Rs. 35,000/- to Government last year in part payment of the loan instalment and this year we have already paid a lakh of rupees for this purpose. The Board has sanctioned another sum of Rs. 35,000/- besides the above, for payment to Government and this sum will be paid in a few days. We shall thus have paid in the current financial year the full loan instalment of Rs. 1,35,000/- I hope it will be possible to pay a further sum before the year is over.... Allahabad has not been favoured with too much help from Government in the shape of grants and sometimes in the past has cast envious eyes on sister cities. I do not think the present Board is anxious to receive many grants. We want to stand on our own legs and do not believe in a municipality being habitually carried on by means of doles....

39. Allahabad is the proud possessor of a fire engine beautiful to look

at but of little or no real use. An attempt to get a grant from Government for a new engine met with failure. The Board realises the necessity for having an up-to-date engine but the high price demanded for it has so far been an effective bar to its purchase....

43. An innovation during the year was the issue of the Municipal Gazette every fortnight. This gazette gives in a concise form the proceedings of the Board and its Standing Committees as well as other information relating to municipal work....

45. I propose to follow my last year's report in one respect and that is to refrain from commanding or criticising any colleagues of mine in the office or the Board. It is difficult for me to do so when many have done good work and tried their best to serve the Board. So far as I am personally concerned, however, I must offer my grateful thanks to the members of the Board and all my colleagues in the office for their never failing courtesy and indulgence and for the help which they never grudged me.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

#### 24. From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board<sup>1</sup>

Question No. 21: Will the Chairman be pleased to state the policy and principles governing the appointments and dismissals of the employees of the Board if there be any. In the absence of such principles does the Chairman consider it desirable to lay down definite principles to be followed in such cases?

Answer: The Chairman hopes that the only principle governing appointments and dismissals should be fitness to do work. Some minor considerations also sometimes affect appointments, e.g. position in the graduation list, etc. The Chairman hardly thinks it worthwhile to frame any other rules or principles.

1. 31 May 1924. A.M.B. File No. 4 of 1924. Extracts.

25. Note for Finance Committee<sup>1</sup>

It is notorious that Allahabad is a very spread out town with great length of road. The city part is fairly congested but the Civil Station is far too sparsely populated and there are few compounds which are kept in proper condition. The Improvement Trust is developing schemes which will spread out Allahabad even more and burden us with the upkeep of additional miles of roads. As it is we cannot keep our roads in proper condition. How will we provide for additional roads? There is only one way and that is to discourage this spreading out and encourage the filling of the open spaces between different parts of the city. The Civil Station must be more built up than it is. It will then perhaps be able to support its roads etc. Large compounds are bad for the city and bad for the Municipality. If any one wants to keep a larger compound he must pay for the luxury.

2. The obvious course for the Board is to tax either areas or road frontages. I cannot give any figures but I imagine it will not be difficult for us to determine this tax. This tax cannot be wholly in addition to the present house and water taxes. The tax would only touch people having big compounds, so that the city will not be affected. In the case of the big compounds the new tax may replace the house tax where it happens to be greater.

3. Another noticeable feature of Allahabad is the number of open plots lying unoccupied. Plots are purchased and then houses are not built for years. So long as houses are not built no taxes can be levied. Thus the municipality has to maintain roads, light them, clean them etc., and not get anything from the owner of these areas. This is improper and it hinders growth. There should be a tax on *land* which should always be payable whether there is a house or not and whether the house is occupied or not. This might be the splitting up of the present house tax into two parts: the land tax and the house tax.

4. It is not my object to increase the incidence of taxation generally. I think it is heavy enough in Allahabad and some relief may be desirable. The changes I have suggested would leave the residents of the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G43/1928, pp. 9—10, N.M.M.L.

congested areas untouched. They would touch owners of bungalows and speculators buying land.

5. I do not think it would be very safe for us at this stage to reduce the rate of taxation generally. For the present we might leave the house tax and water tax alone as we have heavy commitments before us. We might however give relief to the poorer classes by raising the limit of exemption. A desirable and successful decision of this Board last year was to exempt from house tax or water tax houses fetching Rs. 24/- or less per annum as rent. This limit might be raised. We cannot decide without having figures before us. I would however suggest to the committee to approve of the principle contained in this paragraph.

6. The Finance Committee if it approves of my suggestions might appoint a sub-committee to report as to details, or might recommend the suggestions to the Board. The Board might in the latter case appoint a sub-committee.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
Chairman

2.6.24

## 26. To Commissioner, regarding Reconstruction of Roads<sup>1</sup>

No : 79

Allahabad

dated June 9, 1924

Sir,

I am directed by the municipal board to address you on the subject of roads in Allahabad, and to draw Government's attention to the urgency of the problem confronting the board.

2. Allahabad, as you are probably aware, has more *pucca* roads than any city in these provinces although in point of size and population several other cities are ahead of it. There are 87 miles of metalled roads here, most of these being in the civil station where there are large

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 46 to 72, Municipal Department File No. 800 E-46(a), 1929.

compounds and extensive road frontages. Owing to these large compounds the income from the houses adjoining these roads is proportionately little and the cost of keeping the roads in proper condition, in metalling, repairing, watering, lighting, and cleaning them is very great. In spite of the fact that the present burden is heavier than the board can well carry, there is a tendency both on the part of the Improvement Trust and the board to spread out Allahabad and have more metalled roads. Even in this year's budget there is provision for the metalling of a few more roads.

3. Though the permanent population of Allahabad is not as large as that of some other cities in the province, vast numbers of pilgrims visit the city and use the roads. The Grand Trunk Road in Allahabad is probably one of the most used roads in the United Provinces. Latterly motor lorries have started plying here, and there is every probability of heavy motor vehicles increasing. The present roads are wholly incapable of remaining in good condition even for a few months after repairs or remetalling in face of this traffic.

4. For some years past the board has not been spending as much on the roads as was necessary to keep them up to the mark. Demands from other departments and for other necessities were met out of the money which might otherwise have gone to the roads. This continued starvation of this department has naturally resulted in gradual deterioration. An attempt was made last year to budget more money for the roads and a larger sum was spent but this did not go far in removing the ill effects of many years neglect. We are thus faced with a simultaneous deterioration of nearly all our principal roads.

5. Even if we managed to make a great effort and remetalled these roads throughout, our difficulties would not end. Owing to the heavier traffic, specially of motor lorries, the roads will rapidly deteriorate and in a few months we would have to face the same problem. The only solution is to make the roads in such a manner and with such material as to be able to withstand the heaviest traffic. I understand that in Bombay the roads had practically to be re-made entirely because of this, and I have just learnt that this is going to be done in Lucknow also soon.

6. The capital expenditure required for making roads fit enough to bear heavy traffic for a number of years is very great and it is not possible for the board to find the money out of its general revenues. The board therefore is of opinion that a few of the most important roads

in Allahabad might be chosen for the experiment and Government might help the Board by a grant for the purpose. The roads which have to bear the heaviest traffic are, leaving out of consideration the provincial roads, Johnstonganj, City Road, Hewett Road, and Canning Road. I would suggest that a beginning might be made with these four roads and that they might be made by a bituminous process or some other equally lasting method.

7. Government transferred the provincial roads in the municipal areas to the board last year. They have also agreed, after some correspondence, to give an annual sum of about Rs. 27,000 for the upkeep of these roads. At the time of transfer the roads, and specially Grand Trunk Road and Cawnpore Road, were in a very bad condition. The money given by the Government for these roads appears to be proportionately more than the amount spent on the municipal roads by the board. In spite of this fact the transfer of these provincial roads has added to the burden of the board. The full amount given by Government is spent on them and it is impossible to keep them up to the mark. As mentioned above, the traffic on them, and specially on Grand Trunk Road, is very great from Khuldbabad right up to Daraganj. Besides the money spent on them the board has had to use its rollers and scarifiers on these roads and we are hard pressed for want of enough rollers.

8. It is felt that any repairs or remetalling of these provincial roads is almost a waste of money. Very soon after the road will again be in a bad condition. Reasons of economy alone are sufficient to induce us to make these roads with more lasting material. The board therefore suggest to Government to have all the provincial roads in the municipal area remade by the bituminous or equally good process. In case the Government are unable to do this or to give the board money to have it done the board would like to be relieved of the burden of their upkeep and would request the Government to take back the provincial roads.

9. I understand that Government has given help on a most generous scale to Lucknow for its roads and that in addition to a loan for the purpose a grant of five lakhs of rupees has been made. I am aware that Allahabad is not to be compared with Lucknow in such matters. Nonetheless I trust that Government will be able to help this city also to some extent.

10. I am therefore to request Government on behalf of the board to give a grant to the board of Rs. 3,00,000 for the remaking by a bitu-

minous process of a few of the most important municipal roads, and also to arrange to have the provincial roads in the city remade by this process, or failing this to take these roads back from the board.

11. I might inform you that proposals are being considered by the board for the taxation of motor lorries and of large compounds.

Yours, etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 27. From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board<sup>1</sup>

**Question No. 25:** Will the Chairman inform the House whether any action has been taken regarding the Board's resolution necessitating wearing of *khadi* as a rule by every municipal employee on duty?

**Answer:** The Chairman has repeatedly drawn the attention of the employees to the resolution of Board desiring them to wear *khadi*. Recently another circular to this effect has been issued. In a number of departments a copy of the Board's resolution has been hung up to serve as a constant reminder.

**Question No. 26:** Will the Chairman inform the House of the percentage of the *khaddar*-wearing employees in the Board?

**Answer:** It is not possible for the Chairman to give the percentage without instituting an elaborate enquiry costing a great deal of time and energy. The Chairman does not think this worthwhile. He thinks however that quite a large number of the Board's employees now wear *khaddar*.

1. 16 June 1924. A.M.B. File No. 4 of 1924. Extracts.

**Question No. 27:** Is the Chairman aware that in spite of the resolution of the Board to write the proceedings and carry on other work of the Board in Hindi or Urdu or both as far as possible, nearly all the Sub-Committees of the Board are carrying on their work in English? If the answer be in the affirmative what form of punishment does the Chairman propose to inflict on such negligent Sub-Committees?

**Answer:** The Board expressed the opinion that Hindustani should as far as possible be used in carrying on the work of the Municipality. This resolution was communicated to the heads of departments and Standing Committees but most committees still continue to keep their minutes in English. The Chairman does not think that compulsion in the matter will be profitable and in any event the question of punishment does not arise.

#### **28. Note for the Board<sup>1</sup>**

In my letter to Mr. Zahur Ahmad dated 7th July I have stated the facts as I recollect them. I have now received his answer and have read it carefully. Mr. Zahur Ahmad states emphatically that he never wrote to me any letter in which he mentioned that he wished to resign from the Vice-Chairmanship. He says that he merely mentioned his intention to resign from the Vice-Chairmanship to me orally. As I have stated previously my impression was that he had also written but it is clear

##### **1. 19 July 1924. A.M.B. File No. 5/XII-1 of 1924.**

This note concerns the acceptance by Jawaharlal of the resignation of the Vice-Chairman of the Board. However, the resignation, tendered orally, was later withdrawn and Jawaharlal felt he had erred in acting on an oral resignation. The note is of interest in that it shows Jawaharlal confessing to what he deemed an error and demanding that he be censured.

that impressions are unsafe guides and in view of Mr. Zahur Ahmad's statement I cannot affirm the contrary. The result is that the action taken by the Board in having a fresh election of a senior Vice-Chairman was irregular.

This action was based entirely on a statement I made to the Board. Thus a statement of mine was incorrect and misled the Board and induced it to take action which has put the Board and specially some members of it in a false position. This is a grave and a serious matter and I confess that I have felt deeply for my error. The Board rightly relies on the Chairman for correct statements of fact and a Chairman errs at his peril. I desire to offer my apologies to the Board and to express my deepest regret for the action I took. I think that the Board would be justified in expressing its displeasure of this action and I can assure the Board that I will appreciate this. I believe in discipline and no one should be above it.

But an expression of regret on my part is not very helpful to anyone concerned. It only makes me feel a little lighter. As the matter concerns me I do not propose to take part in deciding it and with the permission of my colleagues I shall retire from the meeting when this matter is discussed. I do not however wish to refuse to shoulder the responsibility of decision. I have already stated that having regard to all the facts I think that the Board's action was incorrect and irregular. If this was so then the way to put it right is for the Board to declare so. A Chairman's ruling is not the correct procedure, nor do I think it necessary to have a motion, as requested by some members, rescinding the previous resolution. This declaration would of course only apply to the irregular part of the previous resolution and not necessarily to the whole.

I would again express my regret to the Board and specially to my colleagues Mr. N. K. Mukerjee and Mr. Baqi Khan.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
19-7-24

I have today received a letter from the Commissioner in regard to this matter. This makes the position quite clear. The course I have recommended to the Board fits in.

Jawaharlal Nehru

**29. Answers to the Questionnaire of the Improvement Trust Enquiry Committee<sup>1</sup>**

I desire to state at the outset that my answers relate to the Allahabad Trust only. I have no accurate knowledge of other Trusts. As Chairman of the Municipal Board I have been an ex-officio member of the Allahabad Trust for the last sixteen months and as such I have gained some insight into its working and methods. But I have no personal knowledge of the first two years of the Trust. My colleagues on the Municipal Board who have also been connected with the Trust are in a better position to judge of these two years and of how and why the Trust was started. My own answers are largely based on the information I gathered as a member of the Trust Retrenchment Committee last year. A copy of the report and notes of this Retrenchment Committee have already been submitted to the Enquiry Committee. This report gives many of the conclusions I arrived at together with some of my colleagues and I shall request the Enquiry Committee to read this report, especially the latter half of it which deals with the general questions and the future of the Trust.

1. I am clearly of opinion that the Allahabad Trust has not been conducted on right lines.

(i) To begin with, the Trust was started before the ground was prepared for it. It was premature. No such Trust can function efficiently without a proper survey and at the time the Trust was started no survey, cadastral or civic, had been made. The Municipal Board were just then beginning a cadastral survey. Mr. Lanchester suggested in his report dated 10th April 1920 that the survey work might be done under the auspices of the Trust Committee of the Municipal Board so that planning might be commenced immediately the Trust was organised. This however was not done with the result that a heavily paid staff had more or less to look on as the survey gradually and slowly progressed.

(ii) The Trust started inauspiciously in an atmosphere of extravagance. At the very commencement it antagonised the public and the Municipal Board by its extravagances. The heavy salaries and allowances of the principal officers were far from popular. The purchase of

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L. The questionnaire itself is not available.

an expensive motor car for the Chairman<sup>2</sup>, a small matter in itself, caused great resentment and was probably the most powerful factor in increasing the unpopularity of the Trust. The Municipal Board had all along opposed the creation of the Trust but it is possible that, being presented with a *fait accompli*, they might have fully cooperated with it. The early attitude of the Trust however made matters worse and the Trust began to regard the Board as a rival and inimical body. The municipal representatives on the Trust were considered as enemies within the camp and the unseemly spectacle of the Trust being equally divided and the Chairman voting twice was often witnessed. Owing to the opposition of the Municipal Board and the public the principal officers of the Trust were always apprehensive that their tenure of office might terminate and their time and energy was chiefly spent in consolidating their own position. Far more attention was and has been paid to their remaining in their present well paid offices than to the work of the Trust. They have pursued this aim with singular tenacity and disregard of all public and private opinion. There is a very general feeling in every section of the Allahabad public, and I think there is considerable justification for it, that the high officers of the Trust mean to adhere to their offices till *force majeure* removes them. It is obvious that this kind of behaviour is not conducive to the maintenance of efficiency in the office or the carrying on of good work outside, and least of all to gaining the goodwill and cooperation of others.

(iii) I have referred to the heavy salaries above. As the Trust aged it gathered to itself a large and increasing staff, with the result that there was both a heavy staff and heavy salaries. The establishment charge alone for the current year is estimated to be Rs. 1,20,000/- A top heavy system with such overhead charges can only end in failure. The Retrenchment Committee of the Trust recommended a number of reductions. A few minor recommendations have been carried out but there can be no substantial reduction if the Chairman, Chief Engineer, Executive Officer, Assistant Engineer and Secretary remain on their present salaries.

(iv) The schemes on which work was begun were not happily chosen. It would have been desirable if the Trust had taken some of the congested areas in the heart of the city in hand and made small open spaces and playing grounds, and some model houses for the poor. There are plenty of suitable areas in the city where with a little expenditure considerable improvements could be made. The Trust has got lost in a number of big schemes and as a result of three and a half years

2. Major D. R. Ranjit Singh.

labour can show little except a large and heavily paid staff. The small schemes would have been popular, and in some cases remunerative. They would also have immediately improved the sanitation and health of the locality.

(v) The Improvement Trust was started because "of the extensive character of the improvements urgently required, of the difficulties caused by the numerous sanctions required before progress can be made with municipal works, and of the fact that the Municipal Board has accomplished little in the way of improvements during the past three years, except minor works in completion of its original schemes" (Joint Improvement Committee's report dated 13th April 1920). In spite of the advantages however of a Trust, the Allahabad Trust has succeeded in doing remarkably little having regard to the amount spent on establishment. I think this is largely due to the inexperience of the officers in charge. They were unaccustomed to this work and work suffered accordingly.

2. I think there has been a great deal of waste in the Allahabad Trust. The principal item of wasteful expenditure has been the heavy establishment charge. The whole office has been run on extravagant lines. This question has been dealt with in the Retrenchment Committee's report in some detail. I would only mention here a few other matters. The Harcourt Butler market has been a complete failure. It had little to do with Town Improvement and the site chosen was unfortunate. Over and above the actual cost, a sum of Rs. 1,000/- or so was unjustifiably spent on the opening ceremony.

Considerable loss has been caused to the Trust by mistakes in issuing notices. Owing to these errors notices had to be issued repeatedly in the Mir Khan-ki-Serai and the Zero Road schemes. This delayed matters and every delay means heavy loss.

The Secretary, an officer drawing Rs. 350/- a month, drew Rs. 1,000/- a month for six months when he officiated as Executive Officer. This, I consider most improper, specially as the Secretary could not do land acquisition work which is the chief duty of the E.O. A small increment for the officiating period would have been quite enough. The fact that the Secretary was officiating for the E.O. was brought to the notice of the Trust but they were not informed of the salary he was drawing.

3. I am not aware of any appreciable change in the health of Allahabad owing to the operations of the Trust. The work of the Trust has been so little that no great change could follow.

4. Complaints have reached me of want of proper accommodation for evicted persons. As a matter of fact, however, few persons have so far been evicted by the Trust as no big scheme involving eviction on a large scale has been taken in hand. I think that before any such scheme is started houses must be provided for the evicted poor. It is not enough that plots are offered for sale.

5. The principal causes of the unsatisfactory financial condition are:

- (i) Heavy expenditure on staff and overhead charges.
- (ii) Schemes taken up not paying.
- (iii) Insufficient Government help. As compared to Lucknow and Cawnpore, Allahabad has received little assistance from Govt. in the shape of grants or loans.

6. I think that the present constitution and methods of working of the Trust are wholly unsatisfactory and almost any alternative is preferable to them. But if a change is to be made I would not recommend the suspension of the improvement operations. It is undesirable to suspend work on several schemes already begun. This will only mean loss now and greater expenditure in the future. I am therefore against A.

I am also against the first part of B and do not want the present Trust to continue.

I am not against the work being entrusted to a committee of the Municipal Board as recommended in the latter part of C. I would not like the Board to have direct control of the operations. But considering all the circumstances I would recommend the course suggested in the latter part of B, i.e. the continuation of these operations by the Trust with a modified constitution.

7. I am not in favour of A but if operations are suspended the assets should be handed over to the Municipal Board.

8. I would suggest that there should be an honorary elected chairman and a paid executive officer, a joint consulting engineer for the three Trusts, an assistant engineer and a superintendent of the office or secretary. I would also recommend that the municipal element in the Trust be increased by one, so as to give it a slight majority in the Trust. I would not have, on any account, a repetition of the present conflict. If the present constitution is to continue I would earnestly advise the Board to direct its representatives to withdraw from the Trust. Their presence there cannot be very helpful and frequent friction and opposition is not conducive to good work. The work must therefore either be completely controlled by the nominated members, and in this

event municipal representation is for the present at least not necessary, or it must be put under the indirect control of the Municipal Board. If four members are sent by the Board and three are nominated by Govt., this indirect control will be gained by the Board. I have no objection to raising the number of members of the Trust to 9, though I prefer a smaller number. If the number is 9 then the Municipal Board should send 5 members and there should be 4 nominated members. These 7 or 9 members should elect their own Chairman, who may be an outsider, and who must be honorary. This arrangement will not take away the power of interference from Govt., as under the Act they can easily control the expenditure of funds and the work on the schemes. Their control however must be of a general character. If they are to supply funds, they will legitimately desire some control and under the Act they will have it.

It is now admitted almost by everyone that the Chairman should be honorary. One well paid executive head is quite enough. Even the Allahabad Trust has made this recommendation. I suggest that the honorary Chairman should also be an elected one. This will make him more responsive to the Trust.

The Executive Officer need not necessarily be a deputy collector. He should not be paid more than Rs. 1,000 including allowances, but excluding a motor car allowance of Rs. 100 p.m. The other salaries should be as follows:

<b>Executive Officer</b>	1,000/-	<b>Motor car allowance</b>
		100/-
<b>Assistant Engineer</b>	500-600/-	<b>Motor bicycle or car allowance of Rs. 50/-</b>
<b>1/3rd share of Consulting Engineer's salary</b>	500/-	
<b>Superintendent of office or Secretary</b>	250/-	

The annual establishment should not exceed Rs. 50,000/-.

It is very difficult for me to give figures for future work. Any figure that I may give will largely be the outcome of a guess. I would suggest that for the present rupees five lakhs per annum will be required apart from the income which may accrue from paying schemes. Half

of this five might be given as a grant by Govt., and the other half as a loan. I do not see any other sources of revenue. It is possible however that if the Trust is in the indirect or direct control of the Municipal Board, the latter may help occasionally with funds. But this help cannot go far.

9. As I have stated above, I would not prefer C but I would certainly welcome it to present conditions. One advantage of C is its elasticity. As work increases or decreases the staff can be proportionately increased or decreased. A great drawback to the present constitution is this want of elasticity. The big staff has to remain even when there is little or no work. If a committee of the Board is entrusted with the work I would recommend the employment of an engineer at 500/- or so. Additional staff will depend on additional work. If land acquisitions work is to be undertaken a special officer might be engaged for the purpose.

The funds required for C will be the same as for B. If the full sum asked for above is not granted work will be proportionately less. The sources of revenue are also the same. I might mention in this connection that the amount granted by Government to the Municipal Board in the past for improvement purposes was actually increased by the Board by having paying schemes.

10. Allahabad is a very spread out city. Large distances separate some of the *mohallas* from each other and there is plenty of room for growth between these *mohallas*. There is considerable congestion in the city proper and in part of Katra, and on the other hand many houses in the civil station have got enormous compounds. As it is the upkeep of the roads in the civil station is a heavy burden on the municipality and it cannot afford to increase this burden by having more metalled roads without a corresponding increase in income. Every extension of the city beyond its present inhabited limits means new roads, lighting arrangements, water supply, road watering, sanitation etc. each involving heavy expense. An improvement scheme must therefore avoid this heavy expenditure as far as possible and should take advantage of existing roads. The Trust should aim at a subdivision of the existing large compounds so as to reduce them as far as possible to one acre or less. In the city there are many areas which are covered at present by dilapidated huts with not a single *pucca* house. These areas can be easily acquired and would prove to be remunerative schemes. A number of such small schemes and the provision of decent houses for the poor and small playing grounds and open spaces would increase the amenities of life for a large number of people in the city.

The present method of charging a tax on house values is not a desirable one. It results in plots lying vacant for years. The tax should be on land. This will be fairer and will prevent speculation in plots. There would also then be an inducement for building houses. This is not primarily a matter for the Trust but if such a tax was imposed in place of the house tax it would benefit both the Trust and the municipality.

11. If Sec. 103 of the Act is amended as suggested it would ultimately result in two municipalities for the city. I do not understand how this can be feasible or desirable.

Under the present Act the Trust has a right to include any municipal land in an improvement scheme by merely sending a notice to the Chairman of the Board. No compensation is paid except for buildings. If Sec. 103 is amended and Sec. 45 remains it will mean that the Trust can fatten at the expense of the municipality and the latter has no return.

At the present moment there is more chance of the liabilities of the Trust being in excess of its assets and the Municipal Board does not feel enthusiastic at the idea of its being the heir of these liabilities. If the present wasteful methods are continued the Board would like to be freed from the liability and would welcome a change in Sec. 103. But as I have said above I fail to see how there can ultimately be two rival bodies in a city.

12. (a) I am not in favour of this combined system. I do not think a single chairman is desirable, but there should be a single consulting engineer for the three Trusts. He should be paid Rs. 1,500 p.m.

(b) The Trust can only be financed by Govt. I would not recommend any special local taxation for them. This will make them even more unpopular and it will probably affect the Municipal Board's income. I would recommend however that the Govt.'s share of the *naazul* income might be made over to the Trust.

(c) I have no special suggestions to make. But I wish to point out that the present practice of the establishment charges coming out of funds earmarked for special schemes is very undesirable. If necessary a special grant should be made for establishment and on no account must an encroachment be made on earmarked funds.

(d) I have no figures with me and I am unable to offer any special

suggestions. I think that with a careful selection of schemes and moderate overhead charges improvement work can be made paying and there should be no difficulty in repaying the loans.

13. I am willing to appear as a witness before the Committee.

August 3 1924

Allahabad

Jawaharlal Nehru

### 30. Allahabad Municipal Administration<sup>1</sup>

I regret to note that the endeavour to introduce the spirit of nationalism in our work meets with your disapproval. I had hoped that those who had imbibed this spirit of nationalism in England would appreciate our attempt to lay stress on it here. To show honour to the country's great men is not a novel procedure which we have initiated. Other countries have been known to do likewise. The Board has added to its list of holidays the Tilak and Gandhi Days and thereby honoured itself. No two men of modern India have commanded such universal respect in the country and the Board would have been failing in its duty if it had not given some such public expression of the popular esteem. It is no act of ill-will to any person or people. An address of welcome was presented to another honoured Indian, Maulana Shaukat Ali. No address was given to Mahatma Gandhi as mentioned in your letter, but I have little doubt that the board would have gladly availed itself of the opportunity to do so. The omission of the Empire Day from the list of holidays would hardly be surprising anywhere, least of all in India. The idea of an Empire in the true sense of the word is out of date and even its defenders base their support on consideration of common brotherhood and common interest. In India these considerations hardly apply and only the dark side of the

1. Extracts from a letter written by Jawaharlal to the Commissioner of Allahabad Division in reply to his criticism of the management of local bodies by the Congress. *The Tribune*, 27 August 1924.

Empire is visible. I understand that the celebration of the Empire Day is being given up even in other parts of the British Dominions. In refusing to take part in the welcome to the Viceroy, it was made clear that no disrespect was meant to his person. But the Board felt that such welcome tends to lengthen the life of a system of which they cordially disapprove and they could be no party to them.

I am surprised at your remark that the Congress members are taking advantage of their position in the Board to advance the programme of a political party and that this is illegitimate. The Congress members made no secret of their views during their election campaign and made it very clear that while fully cooperating with Government in municipal matters, they would endeavour to introduce national spirit in the municipal administration and specially would lay stress on the nation building parts of the Congress Programme. These parts are hardly controversial and they are not even opposed to Government unless everything that strengthens India is against the interests of the Government. The members were elected on this definite and clear understanding and there can thus be no question whatever of an unfair or illegitimate use of their position. If they have erred at all in this matter or on any such proposition it is merely by the vote of a particular group and they have always tried to win over others to their view-point. Almost all the matters you mention were carried by large majorities in the Board composed of members of differing politics and some were carried unanimously. One matter, the celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's discharge from jail, was proposed in the Board by a valued member who is a confirmed Moderate in politics and passed unanimously. I would remind you in this connection that the non-Congress members form a large minority in the Board.

We have laid great stress on spinning in our schools because we believe in its economic value. I have little doubt that if you considered the question on its merits and without the prejudices born of political opinions you will appreciate the attempts to revive spinning and put it on a firm basis. If you will take the trouble to learn spinning yourself you will after a few days feel its charm and delight in the music of the wheel. Spinning is not a party matter confined to a particular group. It is for every one, whether he is in the Congress or outside it, and the illustrious champion of it would welcome English officials who take to the wheel.

We have endeavoured to instil into the minds of children attending the Municipal schools, the love of their country and the wish to serve her. I am not aware that this is a very peculiar political idea or is a distorted form of patriotism. I was under the impression that this was an essential part of education in other and more fortunate

countries. We wish to teach our children to keep their self-respect and neither to cringe nor to boast. We want them to grow up as good citizens of this city willing and fit enough to take an executive part in their country's onward progress. It may be that we are frail and imperfect but if you will take a dispassionate view you will no doubt discover that the ideals that have been placed before us are great and good both for us and for others and the patriotism which we desire to develop is of the straightest variety. If the Board has made good even in a small way it is because we were not working merely to carry on but had a definite objective before us and the motive power of these very ideals to carry us forward. These are our convictions and it is on these lines that we wish to work. We would discharge our trust poorly and would prove ourselves unfit to hold our charge, if we abandoned our convictions and pursued a different policy for fear that Government would stop giving financial assistance. Audacity is usually unseemly and unbecoming. I trust the Board will not indulge in it. But I trust also that the Board will remain firm when principles are at stake, despite all consequences.

Jawaharlal Nehru

### 31. Preliminary Note on a Municipal Programme<sup>1</sup>

August 28, 1924

It has been the custom in the past for every candidate for election to a municipal board to assure his electors that he will do his utmost for them; sometimes he goes a little further and specifies certain measures which will specially claim his attention—the betterment of roads, more schools, hospitals and a better water supply, sanitation etc. But obviously everybody must agree to this, although little enough may be done in practice. This does not and cannot constitute a programme.

Our municipalities are continually being criticised for their inefficiency in many respects, and the criticisms are often justified. We are

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G.43/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

The note is incomplete.

told that they do not spend money on important services. On the other hand most of them are in a financially unsound condition and either live on bounties from Government or have no substantial surplus left after paying heavy interest charges on loans. No one dare mention an increase in the rates.

The problem therefore is a fairly complex one and radical remedies may be necessary before we can approach a solution. The problem is not peculiar to India or to our province. Every great or small municipality in the world has to face it today, although the local conditions may vary greatly. It is worthwhile for us therefore to consider the question in its broader aspects before we attempt to draw up a definite programme. This consideration will probably lead us to the formation of a general programme which strikes at the roots of municipal administration in India today; it will certainly conflict with the existing Municipalities Act. I do not think this should deter us from laying down such a programme. The educational value of a Programme of this kind will be great and it will help us to build up our municipal life on healthy principles. In addition to such a general programme it will probably be necessary to draw [up] a more specific and limited programme which might be capable [of] immediate application.

It is now a recognised principle that social welfare work is a primary concern of a municipality. Municipalities are not only supposed to provide adequately for education but also for cultural and recreational facilities, for sanitation, housing etc. Public expenditure is increasing enormously in all progressive communities on these public utilities. It is also well recognized everywhere, except in India, that the uplift of the poorest and most backward parts of a city are the first charge on municipal funds. No city or community can progress if it has black, insanitary hovels and starving people within its orbit. But large funds are necessary for any effective work in this direction, although it is possible even now to divert some of the funds used for other purposes, e.g. the embellishment of the areas inhabited by the well-to-do.

Funds can only come from additional taxation. Even if loans are raised, further taxation will be necessary to pay them off. Thus the problem becomes one of tapping new sources of revenues.

Municipal taxation in India is at present exceedingly low if compared with other countries and yet owing to the great poverty of the average resident it is a heavy enough burden on him. Indeed if a serious attempt is to be made to better the lot of the poorest people existing taxation so far as it applies to them will have to be reduced or wholly removed. This will further lessen the income....

32. On Municipal Taxation<sup>1</sup>

....The appointment of this Committee<sup>2</sup> by the Board has created a considerable amount of interest. The public press in Allahabad and elsewhere has commented on it and indignant correspondents have accused the Board of conspiracies and deep designs to injure a deserving class, and to encourage insanitary and crowded habitations. These comments are largely due to want of knowledge of the facts, but some of them raise a large issue. It was not my purpose, at the time I placed this matter before the Board, to raise this fundamental issue. I was burdened with the idea that under the present system of taxation of houses etc., Allahabad could not progress or expand. The contrast between the congested and insanitary houses in the city and some of the wide expanses, uncared for and untended, in the civil station, was marked. For various reasons, Allahabad was becoming a wilderness. I had not then clearly thought of the remedy. It appears to me now, however, that we cannot dispose of the matter, or solve the problem satisfactorily without facing the large issue. Old proposals of taxing house frontage and the like can seldom be equitable all round and might increase our difficulties.

There are a few facts which we must bear in mind. The first is that taxation in India, both in the rural and the urban areas, is largely on the improvements on the land, whether the improvements take the shape of machinery, a large yield or buildings.

The second thing to remember is that the taxation of rural areas is very heavy—much heavier than urban areas. Roughly, in the former case the tax is 50 percent of the produce; in the latter case municipal taxes seldom exceed 15 per cent and the richer people have to pay income tax as well. In return for the 50 per cent tax which the rural areas pay, the people living there get no special protection or amenities. Living is cheaper there and the standard of life lower. The State does extraordinarily little for these people. It does the taking part and there is practically no giving. In the cities, in spite of the lower rate of taxation, there are supposed to be many amenities.

1. 28 August 1924. *The Leader*, 6 September 1924. Extracts.

2. Land Tax Committee.

Thus the State is practically run from the funds supplied by the rural areas. All the expensive super-structure of the State is paid for by the villages. Not only this, but the rural areas contribute directly to the expansion and improvement of cities by means of Improvement Trusts which get or have got in the past large grants from Government.

It is clear that this state of things is grossly unfair to the rural areas and it can only last so long as these areas are inarticulate or not strong enough to express themselves forcibly.

I understand that the practice in America and in other advanced countries is to tax urban and rural land at the same rate, the former of course paying more because its capital value is greater, but the rate (per cent on capital value) being the same.

I mention these considerations not because we have to deal with these big issues, but it is well to remember them when considering our own land problems. We cannot, as a Board, have anything to do with taxation of rural areas. We should, however, try to reform our own method of taxation so as to conform to modern ideas more and so help in the evolution of a just system of taxation in the country.

It is not our purpose at present to increase our revenue from land and houses in the city nor do we wish to penalise any particular class. The present system in vogue in Allahabad, however, is based on wrong principles and is proving a hindrance to the growth of the city. The house tax, as its name implies, is a tax on houses, i.e., improvements and not on land. A person may possess land in the heart of the city and if he does not build on it, he pays no tax. He merely holds on to the land and it increases in value because of the industry of other citizens who work in the adjoining land. He speculates with his land. The house tax thus tends directly to discourage house building and encourages speculation in land. It falls entirely on the occupier of the house and thus raises rents. All taxing of improvements results in less use being made of the land. There are less houses and rents, being the price of monopoly, go up.

For these reasons, the tendency has been in many countries to un-tax improvements and tax the land alone. In some countries both are taxed, and there are others where the tax on improvements is less proportionately than the tax on land.

The land tax is calculated on the capital value or selling value of the land minus the building or other improvements on it. The rate of tax varies in different countries. In New York, I am told, it is as high as 4 per cent per annum on the capital value both of the land and the improvements on it. This is very high. In other countries, it is usually two per cent or thereabouts. Where both the land and buildings are taxed, they are separately valued and the latter is usually

charged at a reduced rate. A recent law in New York exempts new houses begun before a certain date altogether from taxation for a period of ten years, but the land is taxed from the very beginning.

When a landlord lets out his land to a tenant, he charges him for it whether the latter uses it or not. Similarly a tax on land values is to be considered payable to the community for the land so long as the land is held and quite apart from the question of using or occupying the land. The tax should also be a first charge on the land.

A tax upon building and improvements is finally paid by the users of the buildings etc., but a tax on the land value cannot be so transferred.

In Allahabad the price of land is not much as compared to the price of buildings. A tax on land value alone, therefore, may result in reducing the income of the Board greatly. I would, therefore, suggest that we should tax both the land value and the improvements so that the latter are encouraged. This does not mean any general increase in taxation. Both together need not exceed the present rate, but there may be a slightly better distribution. The question of rate must not be mixed up with the method of taxation. If we approved of the method suggested by me, the rate can be fixed as low as is desirable.

There is an impression that this tax will hit the bungalows in the civil lines. This fear is unfounded so far as the great majority of the houses are concerned. Houses in George Town and most houses in Cannington cannot be affected at all. But a house like Darbhanga Castle with its enormous lands must and should be affected. It sprawls over a goodly portion of Allahabad and neither adds to the beauty of it nor to its utility. And incidentally it pays a ridiculously small sum to the rates. If there had been any tax on land values the ground of Darbhanga Castle would have been greatly improved.

But it is open to the Board to fix such a low rate as to reduce the present burden even on houses. The question now to be considered is not one of rate but one of principle.

I suggest, therefore, that we should have in Allahabad:

- (i) A tax on the land values, i.e., on the selling value of the land, this being paid as long as the land is held and regardless of occupation, and it should be a charge on the land.
- (ii) A tax on improvements and houses, preferably at a lower rate, to be paid, as at present, when the house is occupied.
- (iii) The two taxes above mentioned should not together exceed the present house tax.
- (iv) There should be a general assessment of land values and improvements thereon separately to enable us to determine the new taxes.

This has of course nothing to do with the water rate. That must remain separate. I do not approve of the idea of consolidating house tax and water rate, as has been suggested, I believe, by some people.

The above proposals, if approved by the Board, may necessitate a change in the law. But this is no reason why we should not persevere with them.

**33. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Grants for Roads<sup>1</sup>**

No. 166/XII

Allahabad

September 2, 1924

Sir,

On June 9, (letter no. 79) I addressed you on the subject of roads in Allahabad and suggested that grants be made for the metalling of both municipal and provincial roads. I understand that this matter is before Government. Unfortunately further delay was making the roads worse and consequently the Board had to give considerable time and attention to their immediate improvement. It was decided to spend a large additional sum, to bring at least the principal roads up to the mark. Some of this additional money has been taken from the surplus which had not been provided for, but this was not enough and a larger sum was necessary. The Board therefore with regret decided to rescind its previous resolution, allotting Rs. 35,000 of the surplus to the payment of loan and diverted this money to the improvement of roads. I hope however that it will be possible for the Board to make a further provision for the payment of loans soon.

The Board is now spending a sum of Rs. 86,142 this year on the roads. This does not include the amount spent out of the Government grant on provincial roads. The state of these roads is very bad and the Government payment for them is meagre and wholly insufficient. In

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 46 to 72, Municipal Department File No. 800-E-49(a), 1929.

spite of the demands of the municipal roads, the Board has decided to spend Rs. 5,250 on provincial roads, in addition to the Government grant for them. But this too is insufficient and I shall be glad if the Government will take over these provincial roads or make provision for complete remetalling.

Yours, etc.,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

to be considered payable to the community for the land is held and quite apart from the question of the tax. The tax should also be a first charge. A tax upon building and improvements is finally paid by the user of the building and the tax on the land value cannot be so transferred.

### 34. On Coordination of the Board's Work<sup>1</sup>

I have only just seen the various notes etc in this file, including the EO's note addressed to me. It is surprising that a note addressed to me should form the basis of a resolution of a committee before I have even seen it.

It appears to me that a great deal has been made out of a small matter and unnecessary heat has been imported in the discussion. The question would never have arisen if instead of long notes being written one or more personal talks had taken place. We must try to learn to lessen red tape as much as possible and the surest way of encouraging red tape is to write long notes over trivial matters which can be disposed of in a minute's personal interview.

There has apparently arisen a question which might be termed a question of principle. In reality I see no difficulty—constitutional or practical. It is clear that the E.O. is the principal executive officer of the Board and as such must shoulder the main responsibility for the Board's work. It is desirable that he should be allowed sufficient freedom in routine and petty matters as it is most difficult for any officer to work if there is frequent interference. It is also clear that the standing committees and the heads of department and even the unfortunate chairman of the Board are partly responsible for the efficient and punctual carrying out of work. The Board can only function properly if there is coordination between the various officers and committees and

1. 13 November 1924. A.M.B. File No. 23 III-I, 1924-5.

It deals with a difference of opinion between the Public Works Committee and the Executive Officer of the Board.

a minimum of interference with the work of the permanent officers who must by virtue of their position and experience bear largely the burden of municipal administration.

There is no necessity for this matter to be further considered or prolonged. No more notes need be written. I hope in future if there is any doubt in anyone's mind regarding any matter he will seek to elucidate it by the ordinary methods adopted by men and women in their private life, before a formal file is opened and a note dictated.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
13-11-24

### 35. On the Allahabad Improvement Trust<sup>1</sup>

It appears from the proceedings of this meeting (Trust meeting, dated the 6th December 1924) and from letters of Mr. Basu and Mr. Malaviya that the Trust has not only opposed the main recommendations of the Enquiry Committee, but has also reversed its own previous decisions taken on the subject. They have decided in favour of retaining a paid Chairman, a Chief Engineer, a Secretary and a Steno-typist although only a short while ago this very Trust decided to do away with all these functionaries. The manner in which these decisions were taken can be seen from the letters of Messrs. Basu and Malaviya.

I desire to say little here about the recommendations of the Enquiry Committee. I have written about them in the attached note. I would only add that I am more than ever convinced that it is necessary to increase the Municipal element on the Trust. So long as the Trust is in a position entirely to ignore popular wishes, what transpired on Saturday last will be a not infrequent occurrence. The best remedy for this is to increase by one the number of members elected by the Municipal Board.

1. 12 December 1924. A.M.B. File No. 4 of 1924. Extracts.

In view of what has happened the Board had to consider what its representatives in the Trust should do. It is clear that under present conditions their position is intolerable. The Trust has long been a by-word in Allahabad for incompetence and extravagance. After the fullest enquiry and with the knowledge that a year and a half's working of it has given me I must say with sorrow that the distinguishing features of the Allahabad Trust are intrigue and nepotism. The officers of the Trust care little and work less for the benefit of the Trust and of Allahabad. Their time and energy are entirely taken up in intrigue and canvassing and in ceaseless endeavour to stick on to their posts. In my written memorandum presented to the Trusts Enquiry Committee I stated that I had come to the conclusion that the Chairman of the Trust had a perfectly remarkable capacity for adhering to his office and that nothing short of *force majeure* would remove him from it. I am even more confirmed in this opinion now, and I would extend it to the other officers also. I want the Board to be no party to this scandalous state of affairs. It is painful to me and to my colleagues to attend meetings of the Trust and see public funds being wasted and no work being done.

I trust that Government will soon announce their decision about the future of the Trust. If this decision is in favour of keeping the present constitution and personnel then in my opinion there is no place in the Trust for the Board's representatives, and I would strongly urge the Board to withdraw their representatives from the Trust.

The problem before the Trust at present is not to improve Allahabad. The immediate issue is how to improve itself and so long as it does not do so and purge itself of its undesirable elements for so long it will not be possible for the Board or any self-respecting person to associate himself with it.

### 36. On the Report of the Allahabad City Improvement Trust<sup>1</sup>

1. The Allahabad Improvement Trust has had repeated occasions to consider and discuss the future constitution of the Trust and they have come to definite decisions which I presume have been forwarded to

1. Undated. *Allahabad Municipal Board Gazette*, No. 49 of 1924.

Government. They have decided that there should be an honorary Chairman of the Trust and that, as soon as the time of the present Chairman ends, this recommendation should be given effect to. They have further decided that there should be no Chief Engineer, that there should be an Executive Officer and that no Secretary was necessary. Several other decisions about minor appointments have also been taken. I do not therefore quite understand the force of two queries now put by Government to the Trust. The matter has been decided so far as our Trust is concerned and all that is necessary is to draw Government's attention to our previous decisions. It is possible that the enquiry from Government is meant more for other Trusts and has only been sent formally to us.

2. The only new matter which might perhaps affect the decision of the Trust is the report of the Enquiry Committee. But as it happens this report has accepted almost all the criticisms which were made by the Retrenchment Committee of our Trust and its recommendations, with a few exceptions, are largely those which the Trust itself has made. The Trust therefore must feel strengthened in its previous attitude and there is little reason for it to reconsider its former decisions.

3. I do not desire to enter in this note into any detailed examination of the report or recommendations of the Enquiry Committee. I shall only mention a few principal matters.

4. I entirely agree with the recommendation that the Chairman should be honorary. I do not, however, see the necessity of providing that the Collector should be the Chairman in case no suitable person is available. There appears to be no reason why a suitable person should not always be available. The Collector is usually a busy person with a variety of functions to perform and he is likely to be less suited for the Chairmanship than a non-official honorary worker.

5. I agree with the recommendation that there should be an Executive Officer.

6. I also agree that there never was any necessity for two engineers in the Trust. An engineer of the salary and competence of the Assistant Engineer was enough for our purpose and the Chief Engineer was not necessary. For the future the Assistant Engineer should be ample for our needs. I do not, however, agree with the recommendation that the whole engineer establishment should be placed under Superintending Engineer, Public Health Department. I am entirely against this proposal on general grounds as well as on special grounds applicable to

Allahabad. I must confess that I have come to the conclusion that the Public Health Department is remarkable for the leisurely way in which it does things and is neither efficient nor economical. Nearly all the tube-wells constructed in Allahabad at a very heavy cost — compared to estimates of private firms, at exorbitant cost — have proved failures. The Allahabad Water Works Reorganisation Scheme has been hatching in the Public Health Department for many years. A business firm which took so much time and cost so much would probably have little work to do and would have to occupy themselves largely in contemplating their past achievements. The Katra Colonelganj Drainage Scheme, in which the Board is greatly interested, is still with the Board of Public Health. That august body meets once in two months and usually decides to postpone consideration of matters till next meeting or to call for further particulars. The result of all this is that little actually gets done. The wheels of the various departments move on but they have to revolve in the air and seldom get a grip of the ground.

7. I would imagine that a firm of consulting engineers would be much more suitable for the three Trusts. All the ordinary work could be done by the Assistant Engineer and when necessary the firm could be consulted. We need not confine ourselves to a firm in this province. There are firms of standing and repute in Calcutta and Bombay who will gladly assist us.

8. But even if a consulting engineer is appointed by the Public Health Department I am very much against this department appointing an Assistant Engineer or any other member of the engineer establishment. I agree with much that Nawab Muhammad Yusuf<sup>2</sup> has said in regard to this in his note of dissent.

9. So far as Allahabad is concerned the position is remarkably simple. We have no new scheme to look forward to. We are strictly limited to our choice of work and can only carry to completion a few schemes which have already been largely prepared in our office. Most of the town planning work is done and all that remains can easily be seen to by our Assistant Engineer. I would therefore strongly recommend that we should have an Assistant Engineer only and we should not be burdened with any contribution for a chief or consulting engineer. Of course,

2. Barrister and influential landholder in the eastern districts; member Legislative Council from 1921 and minister in U.P. Government 1926-36. Jawaharlal had known him as a student in London.

if any difficulty arises, which is unlikely at this stage, we can consult the Public Health Department or a private firm and pay their fees.

10. Our present Assistant Engineer is so far as I am aware a competent person and it would hardly be wise to remove him and get a new man in his place.

11. I agree with the recommendation of the Enquiry Committee about the Secretary. I also think that the staff allowed by the committee is sufficient for the work of the Trust.

12. I have already indicated above my answers to the two questions put by Government. But I must say that I have not wholly understood the purpose of the first question. There can be no rivalry between the Executive Officer and the Chief Engineer. They belong to different departments and do different works. The Chief Engineer can only be kept if he is wanted for the engineering work of the Trust. He should not be called upon to apply his engineering talents to the work of land acquisition or other work usually performed by the Executive Officer. As I have stated above it is clear that whoever else remains or not in the Trust, there is no further place for the Chief Engineer there.

13. I presume that there can be no doubt that the Chairman will be honorary soon. I do not know, however, from what date this recommendation will be given effect to. As soon as this takes place the Executive Officer will be even more wanted than he might otherwise be. But presuming that for some months more the Chairman is paid, even then I think that the Executive Officer will be necessary. As recommended by the Enquiry Committee he will have to do a great deal of land acquisition work for the Zero Road and this cannot be done satisfactorily by a new officer unacquainted with local conditions.

14. I would, however, recommend that a reduction be made in the salary of the Executive Officer as recommended by the Enquiry Committee.

15. My answers to the two questions therefore are:—

(i) The Executive Officer should be retained but his salary etc., should be fixed at Rs. 1,000 and the Chief Engineer should leave the Trust. So far as Allahabad is concerned the Executive Officer must remain in any event for some time to do important land acquisition work.

(ii) The staff allowed by the Enquiry Committee is quite sufficient.

### 37. On the Introduction of Adult Franchise<sup>1</sup>

... Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru then took the chair and spoke in Hindustani from the English address. He said despite high hopes with which they began 18 months back they could not achieve much. They had hoped to make the municipalities free and help the national movement. He thought party politics should have nothing to do with municipal works but the municipalities must help national and political work. The Government wanted to exploit the municipalities for its own political purposes. They must stop that. The municipal work was a hard grind and so not inspiring but the real field for constructive work was getting more and more complicated owing to lack of funds and troubles all round. They had to decide the relationship between experts and members and remove the popular inertia. Relations between the central and local Governments must be decided. The municipalities should be independent. They would make mistakes but also learn from them.

Speaking of the difficulties the president said that the Government departments delayed, and individual members hampered, work. They only took interest in such matters as communal interests, appointments and dismissals. They must remember Mahatma Gandhi's advice to the Calcutta Corporation to supply good air, good water, good milk and free education. They must stop popular and communal passions and provide national education. He criticised the Government and the High Court's attitude towards Prof. Gour's book<sup>2</sup>. Regarding taxes he said the octroi and house taxes were bad as they hampered the growth of towns. He proposed taxes on land values to prevent the present system of land speculation which resulted in a serious loss to the boards. Lastly he spoke of the old municipal boards in ancient India which were really states and kept even kings in check. The municipal work was everybody's work and all should help but nobody cared and that was the cause of all troubles.

1. Report in *The Leader*, 12 December 1924, of Jawaharlal's presidential address to the Provincial Municipal Conference at Aligarh.
2. In July 1924 the U.P. Government proscribed the school text books in Hindi written by Pandit Ram Das Gour and widely used in national schools, and the Allahabad High Court declared these books to be seditious. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that these books contained only reprints from the classics and other books, and the U.P. Congress challenged the Government to specify the passages which were objectionable.

38. Note to the Members of the Board<sup>1</sup>

Most of the members of the Board have been aware for sometime past that I have been contemplating resignation from the chairmanship of the Board. With many of them I have discussed this question. It was my intention to resign soon after my return from the Belgaum Congress but at the insistence of some colleagues I postponed action for some days. I have now considered the matter more than once and given it all the careful and anxious thought that I could. And the result has been that I have been confirmed in my decision. Every avenue of thought had led me to this conclusion that I should resign. I need not mention my reasons here. There are many and various. But the all sufficient one is that I cannot give enough time to do justice to the important and onerous office which my colleagues entrusted me with. Friends have suggested that I need not give much or indeed, almost any time, to my municipal duties and that my continuing even in name would be helpful. I am afraid I cannot agree to this. I cannot be a paper functionary. I must either do my work efficiently and well or make room for another. It is my belief that the various departments of the Board demand today a great deal of supervision and personal attention from the Chairman if they are to function as they should. This personal attention I cannot give.

I fear that many of my colleagues will not agree with me of the view I take about my resignation. They may think that I am precipitating a crisis merely to gratify a whim or because of some quixotic notions of mine. I would beg of them to be, as of old, indulgent to me, and to believe me that I would not act as I have done merely to satisfy a fancy or a whim — I have only done so because I think that it is the right thing to do and because I believe that ultimately it will be good for the Municipality. I have today sent my resignation.

I beg to express my deep indebtedness to all my colleagues for the kindness with which they have always laden me and the courtesy and cooperation which no one ever denied me.

Delhi

January 28th 1925

Jawaharlal Nehru

**39. To Chairmen, Municipal Boards, U.P.<sup>1</sup>**

22.4.25

Dear Sir,

Many of the Municipalities in the United Provinces charge an octroi duty on all kinds of cloth, including hand woven cloth. The result is that hand woven cloth is penalised and goes up in price and the most important cottage industries of India — hand spinning and hand weaving — suffer greatly. As it is, it is not easy for the products of these cottage industries to compete without help with the mass production of the big factories. Ordinarily cottage industries are helped and protected by the state, but an octroi charge actually puts a burden on these cottage industries and their products which may make just the little difference which often separates success from failure. May I therefore beg of you and of your Board to consider this question, and, if such a charge is still made by your Board, to abolish it? The question is primarily an economic one and I trust members of all shades of political opinion will support a change which must benefit a most deserving cottage industry. Even Government is taking steps to encourage these industries and a resolution to this effect was passed recently in the U. P. Council, with the concurrence, I believe, of the Govt. If the Municipalities and District Boards of the province would also take effective steps in the matter, the cottage industries would be benefited greatly.

I would have suggested that favour should specially be shown to hand spun cloth as this benefits both the hand spinning and the hand weaving industries. But it may be that it will be difficult for a layman to distinguish between cloth made of hand spun and mill spun yarn. It will therefore be desirable to exempt from octroi all hand woven cloth. This can easily be distinguished from mill woven cloth.

May I also suggest that all uniforms for Municipal employees be made of hand spun and hand woven cloth. *Dusuti khaddar*, dyed any colour one choose, makes excellent and lasting uniforms.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 29/1924-25, pp. 23-24, N.M.M.L.

GENERAL SECRETARY  
A.I.C.C.

For two and a half years, from May 1923 to December 1925, Jawaharlal Nehru served as one of the General Secretaries of the Congress. He took a close interest in all aspects of the organization and carried on a wide correspondence. The letters given here have been selected so as to indicate his general attitude as well as the variety of problems which demanded his attention.



## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### 1. Circular to Secretaries of District Congress Committees and members of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee<sup>1</sup>

Dear Friend,

You must have read the proceedings of the All India Congress Committee held at Bombay<sup>2</sup> with great eagerness and possibly with a little bit of uncertainty. The All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution similar to the one passed by the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee and its outcome has been surprising. Some of us have been compelled to accept the burden of AICC office work against our wishes.

The statement that has been issued by the new Working Committee is being sent for your information. You are requested to read it very carefully because it seems that there is considerable misunderstanding on this subject. The new Working Committee is not in favour of any radical changes in policy and it will endeavour, in all humility, to put into effect the old policies and programmes. The committee has felt that if our energy is frittered away in quarrelling among ourselves even on a single issue then it would be extremely difficult for us to implement our policies and programmes. The committee also felt that civil disobedience and all legislative programmes would fall into the background and only the controversy regarding Council entry would engage our attention. That possibility has not materialised. The majority among us, who had full faith only in the boycott of Councils, voted in favour of that resolution; and this, while maintaining the earlier decision of boycott of Councils, was expected to end the controversy. I do not know whether this resolution will be able to unite us and enable us to apply all our energies in the completion of this legislative

1. 4 June 1923. *Aaj*, 11 June 1923. Original in Hindi.

2. As a compromise between the Swarajists and the No-changers the A.I.C.C. decided on 26 May 1923 that no propaganda should be carried on among the voters in furtherance of the Gaya Congress resolution relating to Council boycott. This led to the resignation of some members of the Working Committee, and a reconstituted Working Committee functioned under the chairmanship of Dr. Ansari.

programme before us or not. If it fails to achieve this then it will be unsuccessful in its objective. The United Provinces has a special responsibility in the matter because it was our Provincial Committee which had first accepted this resolution; and it is primarily due to its support that the All India Congress Committee has accepted it. Therefore it is our bounden duty to shoulder the responsibility of implementing the resolution. That is why I entreat you to apply all your energy to the programme before you. So far we have spent much of our energy in municipal and district board elections and that too at the cost of the work of the Congress; and we should not allow this to happen in the future. Now Congress work should engage our attention first and the rest of the work can come later.

What have we to do immediately? The All India Congress Committee has directed us to improve and strengthen the various Congress units, collect subscriptions and to enrol volunteers. This should be our first duty in the next two months. We should carry out necessary reforms in the district, town and *tahsil* Congress Committees and enrol members. We should enrol volunteers and collect enough money for the Tilak Swarajya Fund so as at least to complete the share of our provinces. The success we achieve in these will be our acid test.

The festival of *Bakr-Id* is approaching soon. It is our duty to see that it passes off in peace and harmony. We should not allow riots to take place by passively awaiting incidents. We should face this from the very beginning and strike at the very root of it. Therefore, all Congress workers and committees should be alert and keep the situation within their control. We shall try to remove difficulties and render you all possible help.

If all Congress Committees give us information of the situation within their limits and specify the kind of help we can extend to them, I shall be extremely happy.

I need not say that the only way to avoid controversies is for all the communities to be tolerant of each other and not be carried away by anger.

I am overburdened and I fear that I shall not be able to do justice to my duties as Secretary of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee as well. Apart from this, constitutionally too, it is not right for the same person to be secretary of both the All India Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee. Therefore, with great regret, I am resigning from the post of the secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee; but I shall not relinquish the honour of rendering service to the Provincial Committee and I hope that I shall be able to serve you to some extent in the difficult days ahead.

I appeal to the members of the Provincial and District Congress Committees of these provinces to heed the call of Congress and to work for the furtherance of our country's cause during the next few months.

It will be good to publish a weekly account of the work done.

Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. Presidential Address at the first All India Volunteers Conference, Kakinada<sup>1</sup>

Comrades:—

I thank you for the honour you have done me and the confidence you have reposed in me in choosing me as the President of this Conference. You have embarked on a great venture, full of the promise of high endeavour and noble achievement and it were fitting that you chose a captain wise in leadership and capable of guiding you aright. But sometimes it happens that the captains are otherwise engaged and circumstances force an ordinary soldier to the front. And so, in my case, events and circumstances, not unknown to you, have put me, a humble worker, in this Presidential Chair. I bow to your decision. But I come to you as a mere soldier and not as an officer. Perhaps many of you are not aware that years ago I was a member of the Officers Training Corps in my school in England. But I ended my career in the Territorial Army of England as a private and was not even awarded any badge or other sign of distinction during my two years in it. As a private then I come to you and seek your indulgence.

We meet here today to consider how we can make ourselves more fit to serve our country and hasten the day of her liberation. We meet as soldiers of freedom and as soldiers we must be men of action rather than of words. I shall endeavour to set an example in this respect by being as brief and businesslike as possible in this address.

The problem before us is to organise a body of disciplined volunteers who will serve their country and be prepared to sacrifice themselves at the altar of freedom. Our thoughts naturally go to the volunteer organisations of other countries and we seek guidance from them.

1. 25 December 1923, printed in *The Volunteer*, January 1925, pp. 5—8.

Specially do we think of the Irish Volunteers and the part they took in the struggle for Irish freedom. We should profit by the experience of others but we must not forget that there is really not much in common between us and many of the Western volunteer organisations. The analogy of the Irish volunteers is a dangerous one, and we can profit more by avoiding their methods and mistakes than by copying them. For let us be clear that the very foundation of our movement for freedom is nonviolence, and any volunteer organisation that is to render effective service to this movement must have nonviolence for its basic principle.

We have had volunteers for many years; volunteers in the Congress, volunteers for social work and menial work. They worked for a while and then returned to their work. Then came noncooperation and more permanent groups of Congress and Khilafat volunteers were formed. Their numbers and power grew till Government, anxious to check their growth, applied the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and declared them unlawful associations. The wonderful response of the people to this challenge of Government must be fresh in every one's memory. Large numbers joined the volunteers and braved Government action, and many thousands went to jail. Eventually for very weariness Government stopped arresting them. But when official opposition was lessened the inner weakness of our volunteer organisations became apparent and they dwindled away, also for weariness. In 1923 another organised attempt was made to enlist volunteers and the triumph of Nagpur redeemed greatly the want of success in many parts of the country. This in brief is the story of our volunteers, and even these few lines will have made clear to us our strength and our weakness.

Volunteers can be of many kinds; but I take it that in this conference we mean by a volunteer a person who has the qualities of a soldier. By the very nature of our struggle he must be nonviolent; but in all other respects he must resemble the good soldier. He must be prepared to face danger courageously and to sacrifice himself whenever necessary. He must be fit and disciplined and must obey his officer's commands. We have seen in the past how thousands of our young men bravely faced suffering and few of us can doubt that thousands would spring up again when the call comes. We have also seen how utterly lacking in discipline our volunteers were and how our movement suffered because of this want of discipline. The fault was not theirs. We paid little heed to discipline or drill and spent our time and energy in exhortations and appeals. We forgot that courage without discipline is of little avail, and a mob, however brave, is powerless before a trained army. Our object was not to have a body of trained volunteers.

We merely wanted to create an atmosphere of sacrifice and to infuse courage into many of our nerveless brothers. We succeeded wonderfully in our endeavour, but this success would have been even greater and more lasting if our people had been disciplined.

We have thus made no proper effort so far to have real volunteers. And the first question for us to determine is whether we require trained and disciplined men who will act like soldiers, or whether we want brave but untrained men, to face suffering and go to jail. Are we aiming at sending people to jail to vindicate our national honour as we did in Nagpur or in 1921—or are we desirous of training our people first, and afterwards whenever occasion arises to offer them for jail or any other service? The difference between these two methods is material, although perhaps it may not appear so. I would strongly recommend that we should choose the latter course and make every effort to have a trained and disciplined body. Without this training our strength will be wasted and our courage will bear little fruit. Above everything, we must concentrate on this training, and having given this training we shall have fitter men and women for constructive work and civil disobedience.

If this view commends itself to this conference and training and discipline are to be made our first objectives then it is desirable that we should offer this training to as large a number of people as possible. For the training will make them better citizens and more capable servants of the Motherland. I would put as few obstructions in their way as possible. Out of their number I would suggest that volunteers be chosen for constructive work and civil disobedience and these must take the Congress volunteer pledge before they undertake any responsible work.

The second important question which this conference will have to consider is, what relation the volunteer organisation should bear to the Congress. I think that there is little doubt that the volunteers cannot be independent of the Congress. It would be difficult for the movement to succeed without the fullest support from Congressmen, and even if it happened to prosper there would always be danger of friction and conflict. The volunteer organisation should therefore be subordinate to the Congress, and the All India Congress Committee or Working Committee should lay down the policy and guide the movement. It is also clear to me that it will be difficult to maintain discipline amongst the volunteers if District and Town Congress Committees are continually interfering with their organisation. I would suggest that the Provincial Congress Committees should guide and control the volunteer organisation in their province but that no subordinate committees should be empowered to interfere. I feel that in any event

the work of organising volunteers must of necessity be largely provincial and it is fitting that the Provincial Congress Committees should have a say in it. At the same time I am clear that effective All-India coordination will be necessary if one strong and efficient volunteer organisation is to be created in India. For this purpose an All-India board for volunteers should be appointed. The board will act in accordance with the directions given by the Working Committee of the Congress. This arrangement will keep the volunteer organisation under the Congress and will, at the same time, avoid undue interference with their internal management or discipline. As the board and the Provincial Congress Committees are both subordinate to the A.I.C.C. there is no reason why there should be any friction between the two. The volunteers will of course work in towns and districts in cooperation with the town and district Congress Committees.

I have had my brief say. The whole lesson of the past three years teaches us that discipline is essential for us and without it we can hardly hope to succeed. Most of our weaknesses can be traced to our lack of discipline. I feel sure that if this conference results in an organised attempt to train and discipline our people it will have done the greatest service to the cause of freedom. Our Akali brethren are today giving us an example of an effective action on nonviolent lines. They are brave and self-sacrificing but their real strength is their discipline. Let us profit by this example.

For a year and more many of us have engaged ourselves in debate and argument to the detriment of much other work. We who aspire to be soldiers should have little to do with wordy warfare and as members of this conference or as volunteers should concentrate on the issues before us and leave high matters of policy to other times and halls. Let this be a brotherhood of service which all who love India and desire to see her free can join. Our beloved leader lies in jail and the glorious spirit he infused in us has dwindled and grown less. Our eyes wander from the goal and our feet falter. But the dark days have passed and work again beckons. Some of the omens may still appear unpropitious. But let us remember that noble Hector, King Priam's son, as he sallied out on the plains of Troy to fight the mighty Achilles, being urged by his brother to bow to unfavourable omens and retreat, replied :— “One omen is best—to fight for our country.”

### 3. Speech at the Kakinada Congress<sup>1</sup>

Mr. President and Gentlemen, [Cries of "English, English"]. Please allow me to speak in Hindi. I shall read the resolution to be placed before you in English.

"This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for the carrying out of the national work on the lines laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls on the Working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained volunteers in cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervise over it, while giving it freedom of internal management and administration."

It means that, in the opinion of the Congress, it is necessary to give the people of India the requisite training that helps them to carry on their national work efficiently. It is a matter of joy to the Congress that an All India Volunteer Organisation is coming into being for the purpose. This resolution suggests to the Working Committee to render the necessary help in organising the volunteers. It further suggests that the Working Committee should bring under its control all those that devote their whole time and energy to the Volunteer Organisation. But that does not mean that we should interfere with their internal organisation.

Gentlemen, it is now more than three years since we began this war of nonviolent noncooperation at Calcutta. Since then Mahatmaji has pushed it on vigorously. It is proclaimed all along that this movement is nonviolent, that it intends no harm to anybody and that nobody shall raise his sword against others. Nevertheless you will understand that this is war. If you really want to attain success in this movement, you must all become soldiers. Nonviolence does not mean timidity and hiding behind the *purdah*. Mahatmaji has told us that sepoys in a nonviolent war should be many times bolder than soldiers fighting in a violent fight. We have carried on this fight for three years

1. Report of the thirty-eighth session of the Indian National Congress, 1923, pp. 118—19. Original in Hindi.

and four months. You know how during this period thousands have made great sacrifices and thousands of men and women have put up a bold fight against the government without yielding. But the result is not commensurate with this huge sacrifice. Have you thought of the reason for it? Our organisation was not thorough. If we had a perfect organisation the British Government would not have existed in India. Now-a-days I am always wondering whether or not this British Government should remain here. Should we change our creed or not? I do not know if this was placed before you, but I would prefer that the present system of Government was rooted out of this land. You may perform great sacrifices and undergo great difficulties; new leaders may come but you cannot attain your end without properly organising yourselves.

We must see whether we are going along the right path and also in the right direction. After choosing the right path we must conform to it. The purpose of this resolution is that all Indians should be trained and should organise themselves effectively to be fit soldiers of Swaraj. We are all speakers; none of us is a soldier. We should talk less and act better. So long as we have not got sepoys, we cannot oppose a nation of soldiers. We are fighting the British now. If you are capable of governing your country you must be ready to offer yourselves at the altar of your Motherland. You will be able to defeat your opponents the moment you outdo them in the immensity of your sacrifice. If you want that an alien nation should not dominate you, if you want to manage your affairs for yourselves, your immediate duty is to organise the volunteers effectively.

A question arises as to the nature of the organisation. Who will manage it? Will it not turn against the Congress itself? Or will others interfere in its organisation? This organisation will be subordinate to the All India Congress Working Committee. We are asking the Working Committee to organise this organisation in consultation with those who are already making attempts in this direction. The Working Committee should keep this organisation under its control and see that its aim and object are not distorted. There need be no interference with minor details. Such interference would impede work.

Do not view this lightly. Please set up the necessary organisation in various parts of the country. By bringing this resolution into force, you will not only learn the principles that should guide a volunteer but you will also put an end to futile discussions and the spirit of insubordination to your superior's orders. An army that spends its time in mere discussions can never enter the battlefield. There should be no disharmony in the organization. All of you should follow one creed. You are also responsible for your provinces.

In the Punjab, the Sikhs and the Akalis are practising Satyagraha. Remember that the whole of the Sikh community is opposed to the Government. They are determined to fight and offer Satyagraha. In every part of the country the Akalis are offering Satyagraha. Why is this community, so small in numbers, able to oppose the British Government? They are not extraordinarily heroic. We can find people among the Hindus and the Mussalmans who are capable of as much suffering. But they have not got the necessary training. The Sikhs are well organised and we are not.

Gentlemen, I request you to accept this resolution and organise in your respective provinces the army that can face difficulties, fight the enemy and perform national service in a nonviolent manner.

#### 4. To Maulana Mohamad Ali<sup>1</sup>

107 Hewett Road,  
Allahabad  
13-1-24

My dear Mohamad Ali,

I have been wanting to write to you for some days but doubt and uncertainty about certain matters prevented me from doing so. I have not recovered yet from the shock of becoming Working Secretary<sup>2</sup>. I am not in the habit of shedding tears for past follies but I confess that the more I think of it the sorrier I feel for having become the Secretary of the A.I.C.C. A greater misfit could hardly have been arranged. Many members of the Working Committee distrust me and dislike my presence as Secretary. I feel that I am not in tune with the committee.

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

2. Jawaharlal was re-appointed Working General Secretary of the Congress at the Kakinada session on 2 January 1924.

The A.I.C.C. office has not come here yet in spite of my strict injunctions that it should come forthwith<sup>3</sup>. I am receiving a fair number of letters etc. daily and I have to deal with them without any files or staff. I hope Raja Rau<sup>4</sup> will turn up soon—I have received a number of applications for the post of Assistant Secretary. Some are from fairly good persons but of course none approaches your standard. I don't know what to do with their applications. I think it will be best for the Working Committee to decide. I suppose any choice that I might venture to make would not be agreeable to some members. Please have a meeting of the Working Committee as soon as possible. It will be difficult to settle down to work without definite directions from the Working Committee. So far we have had only brave words in the Congress and no one seems to know exactly what to do. Let me know the date when you want the meeting and I shall issue notices. Of course the place of meeting will be Bombay.

Our Provincial Congress Committee is likely to close up shop for want of funds. We have exactly Rs. 20/- in the bank and the current month's liabilities to meet. These amount to several hundreds. My business ought to be to work hard for the P.C.C. and try to get it out of the morass. But it is difficult for me to do so with the All India Secretaryship dragging me away. I am very worried because of our provincial difficulties. If we don't look out the A.I.C.C. will soon be in much the same position as the United Provinces P.C.C.

I sent you a copy of a cable<sup>5</sup> received from South Africa yesterday. Please let me know if any action is to be taken on it.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. It had also been decided at Kakinada that the A.I.C.C. office should be located at Allahabad.

4. He had been appointed Under-Secretary of the Congress and served in that capacity from 1924 for about ten years.

5. Inviting Shrimati Sarojini Naidu to visit South Africa. The Working Committee decided that Shrimati Sarojini Naidu and Shri B. D. Chaturvedi should be requested to visit South Africa to advise the Indians settled there.

5. To N. S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>

competence, and we have staked almost everything on the good of human nature. This is hardly business or wisdom. The result has been slackness all round in the control of expenditure and a great deal of avoidable waste. Everything is left to the unhappy Secretary of the Congress Committee and he has little to guide him. With no strict rules, it is difficult for him to raise objections to any grants as soon as they are sent at the slightest provocation. I think

Allahabad  
19/1/24

My dear Hardikar<sup>2</sup>,

I am almost ashamed to write to you. I have hardly done anything for the volunteers since I returned. I have not yet drafted the rules and regulations which the board asked me to do. I have not been idle. I have so many odd jobs that I hardly have time to think. And now I have succeeded in breaking a few laws and in all probability I shall be in jail before long.

If I succeed in remaining out I propose going to Bombay on the 28th reaching there on the 29th. The Working Committee meets on the 30th. Please call a meeting of the Volunteer Board for the 31st at Bombay. You can fix any place and time that suits you. The Working Committee will probably meet at the office of the Bombay P.C.C. in Krishna Buildings.

I shall try to draft the rules etc. before going to Bombay. I should like you however to draft them also. We could then compare the two and perhaps evolve something decent.

My reference to jail above is not to be taken lightly. There is considerable chance of a case being started against some of us here soon.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Please send printed copies of the draft constitution to all P.C.C.s. Numerous copies should be sent.

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (B. 1889); in 1923 organised the Volunteer Movement known as Hindustani Seva Dal; Jawaharlal gave full encouragement to his efforts; in 1931 the Dal was merged in the Volunteer Department of the Congress.

**6. Circular to all Secretaries, P.C.Cs'**

positions that it should come forthwith. I am receiving a lot of  
set of letters etc, daily and I have to deal with them all in my  
or staff. I hope Raja Rau will turn up soon—I have received a  
number of applications for the post of Assistant Secretary. Some are from  
fairly good persons but of course none approach me. I  
don't know what to do with their applications. I have  
individually Working Committee to decide. I suppose

11/2/1924

Dear Sir,

In compliance with a resolution of the Working Committee passed at  
Bombay on Jan. 31st, I have to request your committee to adopt stand-  
ing rules for the collection, custody and expenditure of Congress funds.  
The rules should be definite with as little vagueness as possible so that  
little discretion is left in the matter. I am sending you some model  
rules which have been generally approved by the Working Committee.  
I trust you will frame your own rules on the lines indicated in these  
model rules and will send them to me soon.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1924, pp. 1—16, N.M.M.L.

Please let me know if any changes you propose have been  
made in the rules.

Please let me know if any changes you propose have been  
made in the rules.

**7. Suggested Rules for the Collection, Custody and Expenditure  
of Congress Funds**

27 January 1924

Every one knows that there is a great deal of suspicion and dissatisfaction  
in the country about the management of public funds. Much of  
this suspicion is baseless but also there is considerable justification for  
it. Our procedure so far has been entirely wanting in method and  
every office-bearer of the Congress has had full liberty to do what he

likes. We have apparently presumed that a person calling himself a Congressman or a noncooperator must have a great measure of honesty and competence, and we have staked almost everything on the goodness of human nature. This is hardly business or wisdom. The result has been slackness all round in the control of expenditure and a great deal of avoidable waste. Everything is left to the unhappy Secretary of a Congress Committee and he has little to guide him. With no definite rules, it is difficult for him to raise objections to another's bills. Telegrams are sent at the slightest provocation. I think this should not be allowed to continue any longer. Until this is stopped and the public assured that we are acting on business lines we cannot expect to collect much money. I propose therefore that the Working Committee should issue definite rules for the guidance of the A.I.C.C. office and all other Congress offices. I have drafted some for the consideration of members. They are only meant to form the basis for discussion.

#### A. Collection of funds

1. Only authorised persons to collect money. A written authority should be given to each collector. Lists of authorised collectors should be published for public information. No one else to be allowed to collect on behalf of the Congress. It will of course be open to anyone who is not an authorised collector to collect on his own responsibility and if the public trust him and choose to give him money they do so well knowing that the Congress Committee is not liable for him.
2. A Congress Committee giving authority to collect should give it for a specific area within its jurisdiction. Collectors should only collect in allotted area.
3. Each collector should have a register with a properly drawn up form. Entries in this register should be made as far as possible on the spot by the donor.
4. Receipts should be issued by the office.
5. The collection register should be produced at short intervals at the office, as far as possible on fixed days, for inspection.

#### B. Custody

6. All monies collected must be sent direct to the bank. No part of the collections should be spent prior to deposit.

7. Funds should always be kept in banks and not with private individuals. In case of small towns or villages where there are no banks, the major part of the funds should be deposited with the district or provincial Congress Committees.

8. The person having custody of the funds should on no account spend them.

#### C. Expenditure

9. All payments above a certain amount, which might be fixed at Rs. 25 or so, should be by cheque.

10. All cheques should be signed by not less than two specified signatories.

11. Powers to sanction expenditure within fixed limits to be delegated to office bearers providing for emergency expenditure.

12. No expenditure to be incurred except by authorised persons and within the rules framed for this purpose.

#### D. Rules for Telegrams, etc.

13. Telegrams should be sent only when the post or other cheaper means are not available and when such telegrams are absolutely necessary from the Congress view point.

14. When telegrams are sent they should be as brief as possible.

15. Bills for telegrams should be supported by a certificate that the telegrams were absolutely necessary and dealt with Congress business.

16. Whenever a postcard will serve the purpose no letter should be sent.

#### E. Rules for Travelling Allowance

17. No travelling allowance will be admissible except when (i) the journey is on Congress business and (ii) the person charging it has been authorised to undertake the journey.

18. All travelling allowance bills should be countersigned by the Secretary.

19. Definite rules should be made about the class of which the fare will be allowed ordinarily and in special cases. As far as possible it should not be left to discretion. The rules should also provide if necessary for halting allowance or other incidental expenses. In special cases the president of the committee might

be authorised to sanction a relaxation of the rules but every such case should be reported to the Council or Executive Committee.

#### F. Bills

20. All bills must be submitted to the Secretary who if satisfied will countersign them.
21. It is desirable in large offices like the Provincial Congress Committee offices to have a fairly responsible person to audit all bills as they come and to see that they do not infringe any rule. This duty may be assigned to the cashier if he is good enough. The auditor should carefully check every bill.
22. If the auditor and Secretary disagree about any payment the President may overrule the auditor but such decision shall be placed before the Executive Committee.
23. The cashier or auditor should have a definite sum, say Rs. 100 with him for small payments, as a permanent advance. This advance will be recouped when a bill is presented supported by the paid vouchers which shall be defaced by the Secretary at the time of signing the cheque.
24. Periodical audited statements of accounts should be published by every Congress Committee in the local papers and by hand-bills.

Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 8. To all P. C. C. Secretaries<sup>1</sup>

Yours truly,

Jawaharlal Nehru  
General 3.3.1924

Dear Sir,

Reports in the daily papers state that several provinces are making collections for a Gandhi purse which will be presented to Mahatmajji when he visits the province. Gujarat has taken the lead in the matter and has called upon not only the residents of the province but all

1. No. 8489, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya.

Gujaratis in other parts of India to contribute to it. Gujarat is to be congratulated on the lead but I confess I do not understand appeals being made to people in other provinces to contribute to the Gujarat fund simply because they or their forefathers were at one time connected with Gujarat. No official or other intimation has been received by me about the conditions governing these collections in the various provinces. It is desirable that the Working Committee be informed of all steps that are being taken and I shall thank you if you will kindly send me full information and specially answer the following questions:-

- (1) Is your provincial or any subordinate committee organising collections for a Gandhi purse? If so, have you tentatively fixed a sum for it?
- (2) Are the Gandhi purse collections part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund collections or in addition to T.S.F. or in place of T.S.F?
- (3) Will any part of these collections go to All India funds?

Are you making collections in your own province only or are you appealing to people in other provinces also who may be connected with your province?

I shall thank you for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

## 9. To the Secretary, P. C. C., Gujarat<sup>1</sup>

### E. Rules for Travelling Allowance

17. No travelling allowance will be admissible except when the P.C.C. journey is on Congress business and till the person Allahabad  
has been authorised to undertake the journey. 5.3.1924

Dear Sir,

I am informed by the Treasurer, All India Congress Committee that he has received a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 from Messrs. Maganlal Pranjivan & Co., Rangoon, and that of this sum Rs. 65,242/4/- are earmarked

1. No. 8489, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya.

for "constructive work" in Gujarat. I do not quite understand why money collected in one province should find its way to another province, nor is the earmarking very clear. "Constructive work" practically means all our present work, so that the earmarking merely amounts to this that the money may be spent in almost any Congress activity. Will the 5% quota of the A.I.C.C. be paid out of this? Or will the earmarking save it from this tax? If this is so it would almost appear that the sole object of earmarking is to deprive the A.I.C.C. of its rightful share. Instead of adopting these methods it would be better to put an end to the A.I.C.C.'s quota.

So far as I am aware the practice has been for collections to remain in the province where they have been made. I remember instances in the past when some people in the U.P. sent some money direct to the Gujarat Committee. The Gujarat Committee subsequently paid over this money to the U.P.P.C.C. although the donors had themselves sent it to Gujarat. Any other method must lead to confusion and friction. Except perhaps in the case of a particular institution like a Vidyapitha, there appears to be no reason why collections should be diverted to different provinces. I need hardly point out to you the undesirable consequences of leaders trying to collect money for their own pet or particular province. This not only encourages and nourishes a narrow provincialism but might lead to unhealthy competition and rivalry. It is bad enough in places for two appeals for funds to be made from the same platform, one for the Khilafat Committee and the other for the Congress. It will be far worse for every leader or follower to carry his province wherever he may go and try to raise money for his own province or town or village. It may be that the good sense of leaders will prevent them from quarrelling amongst themselves or from otherwise misbehaving but friction there is sure to be and where there is friction there is danger of ill-feeling. Where is a line to be drawn?

I shall put up this matter before the Working Committee at its next meeting.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

10. To Tarak Nath Das<sup>1</sup>

9/4/24

My dear Mr. Das<sup>2</sup>,

Many thanks for your letters and also for the various cuttings and extracts you have kindly sent me.

You have evidently been misinformed about the Congress attitude towards foreign propaganda. I have not seen or heard of, previous to reading your letter, Lalaji's statement to which you refer. There is no question before us just at present of sending any representatives to foreign countries. Many of us believe in some kind of foreign propaganda but for the time being our difficulties here are so great that we must face them and overcome them before we can give much time or energy to foreign work. Now that Mr. Gandhi is again with us his views in the matter will naturally carry considerable weight with the Congress and the public.

Although there is no question at present of our appointing agents in foreign countries, I may point out to you that the chief difficulty is not a want of men of ability, as of men in intimate touch with developments in India. It is extraordinary how people who have been away for long have lost touch with the movement here. It will be difficult for any one who does not thoroughly understand the position here to represent the Congress elsewhere. But as I have said above, this question is not being considered here because of difficulties nearer home.

I shall put up your proposal about distributing 500 copies of your work—*India in World Politics*—to Senators in the U.S.A., before the Working Committee of the Congress. I am afraid we are having a period of financial stress and the tendency is to avoid all outside and avoidable expenditure. I shall let you know the decision of the committee.

I should have very much liked India to be represented in the International Women's Congress<sup>3</sup> at Washington but I am sorry to say

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39, (Part-I), 1924, pp. 13—15, N.M.M.L.

2. (1884-1958); a Bengali revolutionary who went to Japan c. 1906 and thereafter migrated to the United States; was active in organising support in that country for the Indian nationalist cause.

3. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was holding its biennial conference at Washington in May 1924.

it is hardly possible. Mrs. Naidu would have been the best person for the work but she is still in South Africa. She has done good work there and in East Africa.

The Volunteer Movement here is entirely under the Congress. You need not be afraid of its breaking loose.

Your suggestion that elected members of the legislatures should contribute part of their salaries to Congress funds is evidently based on the misconception that they get salaries. They are not paid except travelling and other expenses.

May I make a small correction? You spell my name as "Jawaralal Nehru". It should be written "Jawaharlal Nehru".

I am very sorry that all your efforts for the cause are not sufficiently backed from home. But we are in difficulties and it is not easy to explain them all at such a distance.

You must have learnt that Lala Lajpat Rai has gone to England. His visit is chiefly for reasons of health.

My Bande Mataram.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Handwritten: N.M.M.L.

## 11. To Tilak Swaraj Fund Trustees<sup>1</sup>

Bombay

25 April 1924

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 23rd April regarding certain inaccuracies in the statement on Congress finances issued by the Secretaries A.I.C.C. I regret greatly that any inaccuracies should have crept in. So far as the figures were concerned I relied entirely on our auditor Mr. Sopariwala<sup>2</sup> and I only had the statement printed after he had passed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 28 (Part II) 1924, pp. 179—80, N.M.M.L.
2. C. H. Sopariwala (1872-1950); audited Congress and Tilak Swaraj Fund accounts without charging any fees. Under Gandhi's influence, he did some social work among the scheduled tribes in Gujarat.

it and, as I thought, checked the figures. I realise now that it would have been better to have sent you a draft before publication.

It is clear that the inaccuracies must be corrected. I propose to issue a short statement correcting these. I shall be obliged if you will kindly draft this statement for me and send it to me. My knowledge of financial matters is meagre and I feel somewhat lost in figures. If you send me a draft I shall if necessary add to it or alter it and then issue it. To facilitate reference I am sending you a copy of the statement on Congress finances.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**12. To N. S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>** Now that Mr. Gandhi is again with us his naturally carry considerable weight with the Congress leadership.

Although there is no question at present of our appointing agents in foreign countries, I may point out to you that the chief difficulty is not a want of men of ability, as of men in intimate touch with developments in India. It is extraordinary how people who for long have lost touch with the ~~country~~ <sup>country</sup> for any one who does not thoroughly understand the

Allahabad  
May 22, 1924

My dear Hardikar,

I have your statement of accounts. I am afraid the Seva Dal is not distinguishing itself. The few reports that I have received are not encouraging. The blame is partly ours. What have you been doing? Have you received the training you wanted in Mysore or Travancore or somewhere in the far south? Has your arm recovered?

You must have learned that the A.I.C.C. is meeting in Ahmedabad on June 27. The Seva Dal Board had better also meet about that time. You might issue a notice saying that there will be a meeting on the 27th or 28th at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting. The exact time and place will be announced later.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

**13. To N. S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
28.5.24

My dear Hardikar,  
I find from your printed application forms for volunteers that you expect them to apply to you if they wish to join the Hindustani Seva Dal. This hardly appears correct. It is not possible for you or your office to know anything about most applicants and you cannot enrol them direct. It is much better for the application to be sent to the local secretary. Even the Provincial Secretary is too far from many local centres to deal directly with these applications.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

**14. On Congress Departments and the Indian National Service<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
10 June 1924

Resolution 5 of the Coconada Congress called upon the "Working Committee to prepare and submit at as early a date as possible to the All India Congress Committee for its consideration a scheme of organisation of separate Congress departments for more efficiently, expeditiously and uninterruptedly carrying out the various items of the programme of constructive work under its supervision and control"; and further that "the Working Committee should also submit a scheme

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

of National Service of paid workers who would carry out the work of the various departments and provide adequate and efficient central and provincial secretariats and local office establishments."

In compliance with the above resolution the Working Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of the President and the General Secretaries to draw up a scheme. This sub-committee has not so far considered the matter. As the All India Congress Committee is meeting soon it is desirable that the Working Committee should deal with the matter and put up a scheme. I do not think there is any chance of the next A.I.C.C. considering this question. There are far more vital problems before it and all the time and energy available will be taken up by these problems. I have however included the Congress Departments and Indian National Service in the agenda.

I enclose some suggestions. I have written them with considerable difficulty and reluctance as I feel that there is a great deal of unreality about discussing these things at the present juncture. If the President and the other Secretaries will favour me with their views before the A.I.C.C. meeting I will try to prepare a joint report for submission to the Working Committee. If this is not possible then we can meet and discuss the question at Sabarmati prior to the Working Committee meeting.

Jawaharlal Nehru

To

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali
2. Syt. G. B. Deshpande<sup>2</sup>
3. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew<sup>3</sup>

#### CONGRESS DEPARTMENTS

I do not think it will be desirable to have a large number of special departments at present. The Khaddar Board already exists and is functioning satisfactorily. I would propose that a small National Education Board be formed to overhaul the whole question of national education. This Board should devote itself immediately to the preparation of proper text books for primary and secondary schools. The

2. Gangadharrao Balkrishna Deshpande (1871-1960); General Secretary, A.I.C.C. 1923-24; Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Congress Session held in Belgaum in 1924.
3. (1888-1963); contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge joined the national movement in 1912; came to national prominence during the martial law regime in the Punjab in 1919; was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1952.

Board should consider the present state of national schools and colleges in the country and take steps to put them on a proper basis. Institutions which cannot be carried on properly either for lack of funds or any other reason should be closed.

I do not think any other department need be formed at present. The Working Committee can easily look after the rest of the work of the Congress. If necessary members of the committee can be put in charge of special work.

Jawaharlal Nehru

### THE INDIAN NATIONAL SERVICE

1. There will be two branches of the Indian National Service: The All India I.N.S. and the Provincial I.N.S.
2. The Working Committee, or a board appointed by it in this behalf, will, appoint members of the All India I.N.S.
3. The Provincial Congress Committee or a board appointed by it in this behalf, will appoint members of the Provincial I.N.S.
4. The Working Committee, and in the case of a province the P.C.C. concerned, will fix the numbers to be enrolled as members of the I.N.S.
5. The Working Committee shall appoint a board to consider applications for the All India I.N.S. to examine applicants and if approved to pass them and issue certificates to them. Similar boards should be appointed by the P.C.C.s for the Provincial I.N.S.
6. No person shall be appointed to the service unless he has satisfied the Board concerned that he possesses the following qualifications:
  - (i) He possesses a complete knowledge of the Province.
  - (ii) He can spin and card well.
  - (iii) He possesses an elementary knowledge of the economic, social and political conditions of the country and is also acquainted with the outlines of Congress history.
  - (iv) He believes in the objects of the Congress and the methods laid down for the attainment of these objects.
  - (v) He has complied with all resolutions of the Congress which apply to him.
  - (vi) He is free from any serious disease or incurable habit that would interfere with the due discharge of his duties.
  - (vii) He has attained the age of 21 years.

- (viii) He is prepared to devote his whole time and attention to the service entrusted to him from time to time.
- (ix) His general character is good and he is fit for national service.

7. Candidates should not receive more than what is required for the maintenance of their dependents and themselves, provided that in no case should a member of the Provincial I.N.S., receive more than Rs. 100 per month. Provided further that no candidate should be approved who is heavily in debt or who has a large family that cannot be reasonably supported on a monthly honorarium of Rs. 100.
8. Candidates should produce certificates of character signed by at least two respectable men.
9. Candidates will be liable to dismissal for continued neglect of duty, deliberate breach of discipline, dishonesty or non-compliance with the resolutions of the Congress in so far as they are applicable to them.
10. Each candidate who has been approved by the Board shall receive a letter of appointment and instructions to be signed by the Chairman of the A.I.C.C., or the P.C.C., as the case may be, which shall include specific directions for the strictest observance of nonviolence in word and deed and the details of the service to be performed by him.
11. Selected candidates may be required to undergo a further course of training, and may be stationed, in the case of the All India I.N.S., any where in the country, and in the case of the Provincial I.N.S. in any part of the province concerned.
12. Selected candidates must give an undertaking in writing to carry out the resolutions of the Congress in so far as they apply to them to observe strict nonviolence in word and deed, to observe the discipline of the service, and always to serve their country to the utmost of their ability.
13. Both men and women may become members of the I.N.S.

**Jawaharlal Nehru**

15. To Maulana Mohamad Ali<sup>1</sup>

and the Bureau. I would recommend that it should be done and the numbers etc. said. You will probably see Panditji. Kindly speak to him about the matter and tell him what he thinks. You may also speak to the Secretary about the Bureau. Also you might discuss the question of the A.I.C.C. and the Bureau's policy of non-cooperation.

107, Hewett Road,  
Allahabad  
11th June 1924

My dear Mohamad Ali,

I have just received your telegram about Desai's<sup>2</sup> notice. I have not seen this notice and I am not sure that I understand this telegram. I presume that Desai has issued a warning to visitors to make their own arrangements. I am writing to Desai and asking him to meet your wishes in the matter and to issue a notice accordingly. It is hardly possible for me to issue any notice as I do not know what arrangements are being made or can be made in Sabarmati. The hall where the meeting of the A.I.C.C. is going to be held<sup>3</sup> is not a very big one and I understand that at the most 200 visitors can be admitted. If however there is a full attendance of members this number of visitors will have to be reduced.

The usual practice so far has been to make arrangements for members and sometimes even to charge them for their arrangements. Visitors have never been encouraged and I am not aware of any arrangements having been made for their stay or board at any previous meeting. A large number of members of the A.I.C.C. are against admitting visitors to the A.I.C.C. meetings and at every meeting a proposal is brought forward to exclude visitors.

For the next meeting the Gujarat P.C.C., has invited the members to be their guests. They will have some difficulty in making arrangements for so many people in or near Sabarmati. It is possible that they may not have any houses or other suitable places left for the accommodation of visitors.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

2. Mahadev Desai.

3. At Ahmedabad.

**16. To Shankarlal Banker<sup>1</sup>**

(a) His general conduct is good and he is fit for national service.

7. Candidates should not receive more than what is required for the services.

14 June 1924

My dear Shankarlal,

Thanks for your letter. I shall answer it tomorrow when I hope to have a little more time. Meanwhile I only wish to assure you that the possibility of my resignation hinted at in the note I sent you was not meant to be a threat or even an intelligent anticipation of coming events. I have no special desire to resign and I do not propose to do so unless I feel that it is absolutely necessary. Surely you can imagine a situation when it may be impossible for me as well as others to continue in office. When everything is in the melting pot, as you put it, why should I be impervious to heat or refuse to melt?

I am enclosing a supplementary statement on Congress finances which I am issuing today. I hope you approve of it.

I propose to reach Ahmedabad on the evening of the 25th.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 28/Part II, 1924, p. 263, N.M.M.L.

**17. To Maulana Mohamad Ali<sup>1</sup>**

My dear Mohamad Ali,

Panikkar has evidently decided to leave the Akali Sahayak Bureau and take to editing the *Hindustan*. He has not written to me anything definite about his plans but I take it that he cannot remain in Amritsar

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p. 451, N.M.M.L.  
See also Nos 59 and 69.

30th July 1924

much longer. Please let me have your directions as to what should be done now with the Bureau. I would recommend that it should be closed up and the furniture etc. sold. You will probably see Panikkar in Delhi. Kindly speak to him about the matter and tell him what he should do about the Bureau. Also you might discuss the question of writing a history of noncooperation.

The A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad directed that Ansari's report on the National Pact should be circulated. I find that this report is not signed and have therefore written to him about it. Please ask him to signify his consent to me. Otherwise I cannot get it printed.

How is your spinning getting on?

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**18. To The Treasurer, A.I.C.C.<sup>1</sup>**

16th August 1924,

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th August forwarding to me the bill of *The Bombay Chronicle*. I am afraid it is not possible for me to check it from this distance. The bill appears excessive but I must accept anything that the auditor and you pass. I notice that Mr. Sopariwala has passed the bill for Rs. 950. If you can succeed in reducing the figure, we shall be the gainers. I shall wait to hear from you and shall then pass the bill and send it back to you for payment. I presume you will also require a requisition and debit slip.

As regards distribution, copies should first be sent to all members of the Working Committee as they will have to consider it at the next meeting. I do not think it is necessary to send a copy to each member of the A.I.C.C. Copies should be sent in sufficient numbers to all

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 2 (Part-I), 1924, pp. 39—91, N.M.M.L.

the P.C.Cs and they might be asked to send it to all district committees and to such members of the A.I.C.C. in their province as they consider necessary. It is important the accounts be sent by you to all prominent newspapers — English and vernacular, daily, weekly & monthly. You can easily make a list of such papers, including of course Anglo-Indian papers. If you desire it however I can send a list. A little printed slip might be added to each copy to the following effect : "With the compliments of the Treasurer of the All India Congress Committee". You might also state in this slip that copies of the previous year's accounts can be obtained at your office. I think you should send at least 100 copies, if not more, to newspapers. We have to give wide publicity to it.

In one of my circulars to the A.I.C.C. members I shall state that copies of the accounts can be obtained at your office. If any member writes for it he should certainly be supplied with a free copy.

As for the previous year's accounts and the copies left over this year, I would not advise a sale. Nobody wants to buy accounts and we must not put any restrictions in the way of their distribution. We might say that any one who writes for them and sends 2 annas (or whatever the figure might be) for postage will be sent a copy. Every newspaper & member of the A.I.C.C. must however be supplied free.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**19. To N. S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

4th September, 1924

My dear Hardikar,  
Thanks for your letter of the 28th August.

I am in a difficulty and I do not know what to do or advise. In answer to my circular about the Seva Dal, Mahatmaji has written to

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

say that in his opinion the scheme is premature and the work should be left to local effort. This means that the Working Committee will in all likelihood postpone further consideration of the scheme. In view of this fact I should like you to circularise the members of the All India Board and invite their opinions as to what should be done. If they desire a meeting of the Board, this should be held, and it is not very material whether I attend it or not. No date has so far been fixed for the next Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**20. To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C., Bombay<sup>1</sup>**

107 Hewett Road,  
Allahabad  
23rd October, 1924

Dear Sir<sup>2</sup>,

I am in receipt of your letter without number dated 21st October and note Mr. Sopariwala's views on the subject of audit of provincial accounts. While fully appreciating his arguments and yours I am afraid I do not agree with the conclusion that visits to the various provinces are not called for. It is not very material however what I think in the matter. The Working Committee at Delhi was clearly of opinion, after full discussion, that our auditor should visit the provincial headquarters. That question is therefore settled and we have to comply with the committee's directions.

I do not think that the sending of accounts by post will serve our purpose. It will no doubt be of some help to you and I am therefore

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

2. Jamnalal Bajaj was the Treasurer of the Congress at this time.

requesting all P.C.Gs to do so, but this cannot take the place of the auditor's visit. Please therefore make arrangements for the tour of the auditor.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

Copy forwarded to Maulana Mohamad Ali for information.

## 21. To N. S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

7th November, 1924

My dear Hardikar,

I owe you many apologies for the delay in dealing with several letters and circulars from you. I have also been very much put out and perturbed lately and I have found it difficult to do all my work. Please forgive me.

I shall certainly send you a short message for the *Volunteer*. It will go off in another two or three days.

I have not heard from you about the balance of money with me. Have you consulted the other members of the Board? I am in favour of the money being invested as you propose but the Board should be consulted.

I am afraid it is not possible for us to meet before the Congress. Nor is it very necessary. Everything—including the future of the Congress—is in a state of flux and it is difficult to make any plans for the future. Perhaps we may be in a better position at Belgaum.<sup>2</sup>

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The Congress was to hold its annual session at Belgaum under Mahatma Gandhi's presidency in December 1924.

Regarding your proposals for the Volunteers' Conference, I would suggest as follows :—

- 1) I do not agree with you about my being president again. I am prepared to do the formal work of president but it is far better for you to have another president for the conference. I shall gladly of course serve the conference in any way I can.
- 2) I think the Volunteers' Conference should not be restricted to a small number of delegates. Why not open it to all full or first members of the Dal? There are not many. In matters of voting if you like, provinces may vote separately.
- 3) The Subjects Committee might be limited as you suggest.

North India is in a bad way owing to Hindu Muslim troubles and is not likely to send many delegates to the Congress.

I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 22. Message to The Volunteer<sup>1</sup>

Parties and varying policies and rival programmes are fighting for mastery. But one thing stands clear. India's greatest weakness has been for long and is today her lack of discipline. Without discipline the wisest of policies and the best of programmes are doomed to failure. And even an indifferent programme coupled with united and disciplined action can lead us to success. Thus unity and discipline are the two essentials for us today, and discipline of the body and mind is the surest way to unity. The Volunteer Movement is striving to introduce discipline in our National Movement and deserves the encouragement and the active support of all who wish to build a free and prosperous India on sure foundations. I welcome Dr. Hardikar's new paper<sup>2</sup> as a champion of this Movement and a stout soldier in the fight for freedom.

1. *The Volunteer*, January 1925.

2. Dr. N. S. Hardikar started publication of the *Volunteer* magazine from Hubli, from January 1925 and it continued till 1930 when it had to be discontinued soon after the commencement of the Civil Disobedience movement.

**23. To Henri Barbusse<sup>1</sup>**

9th February, 1925

Dear Sir<sup>2</sup>,

I have learnt with much pleasure from your letter to the press of the formation by a number of distinguished and learned Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of the Comite Pro-Hindou. May I on behalf of the Indian National Congress extend to your Committee our warmest welcome and assure you of our fullest cooperation? I am sending you under separate registered covers a number of Congress publications which might interest you. I hope to send you other publications as they are issued. I shall be glad if you will be good enough to send to this office your monthly "Bulletin of Indian Information". I trust you will write to us and let us know how we can be of service to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

Enclosure : List of Books sent.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 33/1925, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. Henri Barbusse (1873-1935); French novelist, best known for his novel, *Fire*.

**24. To Raghupati Sahai<sup>1</sup>**

20 Western Hostel,  
Raisina, Delhi  
23.2.25

My dear Raghupati,

You need not have been so precipitate about the payment of Maulana Mohamad Ali's account. Travelling bills are not paid by wire however urgent they may be. Every bill must pass through the usual

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 67/1925, pp. 21—22, N.M.M.L.

routine and be passed by the proper authorities before any payment is made. The fact that a person is hard up does not suspend the rules. We are all usually hard up. The accounts should be thoroughly checked and after they are passed by the accountant and either Raja Rau or you, should be sent to me if I am still here — vouchers need not be sent. I do not at all understand why these accounts should overlap with others already paid. *Prima facie* this means that confusing and bad accounts have been sent. If this is so I would probably have returned them and asked for better accounts.

No special zeal need be shown in future in paying bills. The surplus energy might well be directed to collecting outstandings.

Kindly ask Raja Rau to send me the statement of accounts for the past year which he and I were labouring to make.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 25. To Maulana Mohamad Ali<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 7th, 1925

Dear Sir,

The Working Committee decided nearly two years ago that members attending meetings of the Committee were entitled to be paid their actual travelling expenses. No definite rules however were laid down and the Secretary has thus got the burden of passing travelling bills thrown upon him without any instructions to guide him. The practice has been for a few members of the committee to charge travelling expenses usually 3rd class or intermediate but sometimes second class. The matter was placed before the Working Committee informally last year and members were of the opinion that definite rules should be framed on the subject. No such rules were however made. I have now received accounts of travelling expenses from some members and

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

I find it extraordinarily difficult to deal with them without some instructions. The matter was referred to the president, and he has directed me to consult the members of the committee. I shall be obliged therefore if you will kindly let me know your views regarding the payment of travelling allowance to members of the committee. In particular I should like you to consider the following points :

1. Should any class be specified for railway travelling? Or should it be left to the choice of the member?
2. Should travelling allowance be paid for attending meetings of the committee only or for doing other public work connected with the Congress; e.g. Hindu-Muslim disputes etc.?
3. Should travelling allowance be paid for attending the Congress Session or the committee meetings held during the Congress Session?
4. Should the travelling expenses of a servant accompanying the member be paid?
5. Should expenses incurred other than railway fares be also paid e.g. carriage hire, coolie hire, food charges etc.? Is it desirable to fix a round sum for daily incidental expenses when travelling instead of demanding a detailed account of such expenses.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me an early answer.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 67/1925, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. *Handwritten (1924-1935): Frank Johnson, N.M.M.L.*  
BodhikarA

RSPI dR/17.3.1925

## 26. On Maulana Mohamad Ali's Travelling Bills<sup>1</sup>

17.3.1925

Maulana Mohamed Ali's account contains many items about which there are no directions from the Working Committee. It is difficult for me to pass these items or not to pass them in the absence of rules and directions. The members of the Working Committee are being circulated about the desirability of having definite rules. Meanwhile however this matter cannot be kept pending. Payment indeed has already been made as an advance.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 67/1925, p. 35, N.M.M.L.

The bills are passed for payment. Rs. 683/14/6 to be paid in full settlement of Maulana Mohamed Ali's travelling account to date.

Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

**27. To Gauri Shankar Misra<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
3/4/1925

My dear Gauri Shankar,

Thanks for your letter and for the information supplied. I am afraid you have misunderstood me. There is or can be no question of mistrust in a matter of this kind. My business is to see that all formalities are observed, all rules are followed regardless of personalities. The relaxation of rules for individuals specially in financial matters leads to undesirable results. No one—not even the Governor of the U.P.—can get paid a rupee from the Accountant General without every formality being fulfilled. I would have troubled you, as I am troubling many others, if the sum involved had been Rs. 12 only instead of Rs. 1,200. You might be interested to know that among others I am troubling Mohamad Ali, Santanam<sup>2</sup>, Mrs. Naidu and George Joseph for detailed accounts. The question of accounts has been repeatedly up before the Working Committee and, specially in view of the charges made against the Khilafat funds<sup>3</sup>, strictures have been enjoined on the Secretary. There is an amazing amount of slackness and irresponsibility in dealing with public funds and this has to be checked.

As you have no detailed account books of the *Navayuga* there is no point in your troubling now to draw up a balance sheet. Please therefore do not bother to do so. I suppose I have got as much information as I can under the circumstances on the subject. I propose to close the file now.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 1, 1924, pp. 75—77, N.M.M.L.
2. Pt. K. Santanam, barrister at Lahore and founder director of Lakshmi Insurance Company; Secretary of the Congress Punjab Inquiry 1919—20; d. 1949.
3. About Rs 16 lakhs had been collected for the Khilafat movement, and there were serious charges of embezzlement.

28. To Henri Barbusse<sup>1</sup>

16-4-1925

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 25th March 1925 and for the first number of your Bulletin which you have kindly sent. It is gratifying to learn of your committee's activities in the cause of Indian freedom for which we are struggling. We realise that the burden of the struggle must be borne by India and Indians and we cannot share it with others. But we also realise that the sympathy and goodwill of the rest of the world is very necessary and valuable for us. Specially do we value the efforts which distinguished sons and daughters of France are making to understand our problems and to extend their sympathy and support to us.

I shall gladly send you our publications as they are issued. If you think that extra copies are required of any particular book for any library or institution, I shall endeavour to send more copies.

I shall suggest to representative Indians who may be passing through France to put themselves in touch with your committee.

With regards and greetings,

I am,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 33/1925, pp. 9—10, N.M.M.L.

29. To Municipal School Teachers in Allahabad<sup>1</sup>

23.4.1925

During my chairmanship of the Municipal Board I studiously refrained from asking you to join the Congress or take part in any other public activity. I would have welcomed your becoming members of the Congress but I did not think it proper to say anything which, having regard to my official position, might have been construed almost as an order. Now that I am no longer the chairman or even a member of the Board, I feel I can speak without restraint or hesitation.

I should like to congratulate you on the work you have done to establish spinning on a firm basis in the Municipal schools. Allahabad has given a splendid lead in this respect to other Municipalities and this is largely due to the active help and willing cooperation of the teachers. I trust you will continue this work with the same faith and ardour and will demonstrate even to the doubtful that spinning in schools is in every way a desirable innovation.

I would welcome your joining the Congress as spinning members. You must be aware that under the new Congress Constitution members have to give 200 yards of hand-spun yarn per month. This may be self-spun or not, but I would certainly prefer that persons joining should spin themselves and send this yarn. I would indeed like you not only to become spinning members yourself but to induce others to do so. You may if you like organise small spinning clubs for residents of particular localities.

I hope also that you will only use hand-spun khaddar for yourself and for your families.

I need hardly add that these are mere suggestions for your approval and adoption. If you do not agree with them then you should not of course adopt them. The Congress can only be strengthened by willing members, and any pressure to enrol unwilling members defeats its own object.

I shall be glad to give you any further information on the subject that you may desire.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 29/1924—25, pp. 37—39, N.M.M.L.

**30. A Note for the Working Committee on the Ajmer Khaddar Dispute<sup>1</sup>**

28-5-1925

An unfortunate difference of opinion has arisen between the All India Khaddar Board and the Ajmer Khadi Board. A resolution of the All India Khaddar Board relating to some monies given to the Provincial Board was not obeyed by the latter as a whole although some individual members of the Provincial Board acted up to it. This has created an extraordinary and undesirable situation in Rajputana. As the points in dispute involve important questions of discipline and principle the matter has been referred to the Working Committee for their directions.

The facts and the view points of both the parties are given in the correspondence and the other papers placed before the committee. I attended a meeting of the All India Khadi Board held principally to reconsider the Ajmer situation. At this meeting the representatives of the Ajmer P.C.C. and Ajmer Khadi Board were present and full and lengthy discussions took place. I informed the Ajmer representatives that the Working Committee would consider the matter at Calcutta and invited them, if they thought necessary, to send any further representation or any one of their members to the Working Committee meeting.

The facts are briefly as follows:

The Working Committee made a grant of Rs. 25,000 to the Ajmer P.C.C. in November 1921 for *khadi* work. Part of this money was actually paid to Ajmer, the rest was eventually handed over to the Khadi Department of the A.I.C.C. to be held in trust for the Ajmer P.C.C. and to be given to Ajmer on the Member-in-charge being satisfied that *khadi* work was being properly done. The A.I.K.B. when formed took charge of the balance of these funds from the old Khadi Department. The A.I.K.B.'s first task was to organise in conjunction with the Ajmer P.C.C. a provincial Khadi Board in March 1924; moneys amounting to Rs. 11,161/3/3 were given to this Provincial Board,

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 66/1925, pp. 5-17, N.M.M.L.

the President and the Secretary of the Board binding themselves down in writing to return the money to the A.I.K.B. within three months of notice, should the A.I.K.B. consider that the money was not being properly utilised.

The Provincial Board worked harmoniously for a while, but towards the end of 1924 there was friction amongst the members and two groups were formed. Work naturally suffered. For some years past the condition of the Congress Organisation in Rajputana has not been very satisfactory. There has been periodical friction and a large number of people have ostentatiously kept away from the Congress. This too had a bad effect on the *khadi* work.

Early in 1925 the President and Secretary of the A.I.K.B. went to Rajputana, at the invitation of the local Congress and *khadi* workers, to reorganise *khadi* work. They were not at all satisfied with existing conditions and were of opinion that money was not being properly utilised. They made, with the knowledge of local workers, arrangements with a private firm to have a big *Khaddar bhandar*.

Subsequently the A.I.K.B. considered the position in Rajputana. Letters were placed before the Board from the President and the Secretary of the Provincial Khadi Board. Each person complained against the other and drew a dismal picture of the machinations of others. The A.I.K.B. thereupon decided on April 22nd, 1925 that as the Ajmer Khadi Board had no longer the cohesion or stability required for the efficient discharge of *khadi* work in the province, and work had actually been hampered by differences amongst leading workers, the money given to the Ajmer Board be recalled. They did not however claim the full sum given but sent a representative to take charge of stocks and monies then held by the Ajmer Board. The idea was that the A.I.K.B. should directly supervise *khadi* work in the province.

The stocks of the Ajmer Board were partly in Beawar and partly in Ajmer. The representative of the A.I.K.B. went to Beawar first with letters from the President and Secretary of the Ajmer Board. He saw the President at Beawar on the 26th April and the latter willingly handed over charge of the Beawar stocks. A meeting of the Ajmer Khadi Board had already been convened for that day at Ajmer to consider other matters. This meeting when it heard of the A.I.K.B. resolution and that a representative had actually arrived at Beawar to take charge, hurriedly adjourned and a number of members took train to Beawar where they met at about midnight and continued their deliberations till about 3.30 a.m. of the 27th April. There was evidently an exchange of hot words between the President of the Provincial Board and some of the members who had come from Ajmer. The President's action in handing over charge to the A.I.K.B. was much

resented. The President refused to take part in the midnight meeting alleging on various grounds that the meeting was illegal. The other members however continued. On the 27th they passed a number of resolutions protesting strongly against the resolution of the A.I.K.B. and expressing their disgust at the action of their President in handing over charge. To mark their displeasure at this and other misdeeds of the President they there and then dismissed him from his office. They also went and put on another lock on the stocks which had previously been handed over to the A.I.K.B. This was followed by public notices by members of the provincial board against each other.

The President of the Ajmer Board has retorted by getting the written approval of a number of members of his board—according to him a majority—of his action in handing over charge. The Executive Committee of the Ajmer P.C.C. on the other hand has upheld those who condemned the President.

A large number of questions arise :

1. Can the A.I.K.B. in any event take back the money given to Ajmer for *khadi* work? The Ajmer people contend that the money was a grant and cannot be taken back.
2. In case the A.I.K.B. is entitled to take the money back must it not give three months' notice under the terms of the board? The Ajmer people contend that this notice must be given. The A.I.K.B. say that notice would certainly be necessary if the full sum was demanded back but as they merely propose to take charge of the existing stocks, whatever they might be even after the losses that have been incurred, notice is hardly necessary.
3. Apart from the validity of the action of the A.I.K.B. the question arises as to how far it was proper for the Ajmer Board to act in the manner they did. According to the A.I.K.B. indiscipline of this kind and flat disobedience of orders is likely to make work very difficult and the proper course for any party or board aggrieved is to obey and then appeal or refer the matter to the Working Committee.
4. The present Constitution and personnel of the Ajmer Khadi Board is also challenged. The Board as originally formed consisted of seven members plus the President and Secretary of the P.C.C. that is 9 in all. In the resolution of the P.C.C. forming the Board it appears that there was a clause giving full power to the Secretary P.C.C. to add any number of members to the Khadi Board. The official copy of the resolution sent to the A.I.K.B. did not contain this clause. Subsequently however a printed notice was sent to the

A.I.K.B. and this notice contained, *inter alia*, the resolution including the clause. The power to nominate members was also exercised by the Secretary, P.C.C. last year and no objection was raised by the A.I.K.B. to his nominations. The A.I.K.B. say that their attention was not drawn to this clause or power till very recently when four fresh nominations were made by the Secretary P.C.C. They say that they would certainly have objected to such an extraordinary power being given to the Secretary and they would probably not have given any money till the clause was altered.

The present position is that a majority of the provincial board as formed last year is decidedly in favour of the President of the board and approves of handing over charge to the A.I.K.B. The four new nominations however of the Secretary have converted this majority into a minority. But whatever way the majority may lie, the Board is hopelessly divided into groups hostile to each other.

5. The dismissal of the President of the Provincial Board does not affect matters much but it does raise a question of procedure. The manner in which it was done was summary and unusual.

6. The important questions of principle that are raised are :

- (i) Interpretation of Cocanada resolution forming A.I.K.B. What are powers of A.I.K.B.?
- (ii) Can the A.I.K.B. work independently in any part of a province without interfering with the work of the P.C.C.?
- (iii) Can the A.I.K.B. enter into any direct arrangements with firms or individuals for the sale of *khadi*, e.g. opening of a *bhandar*? The A.I.K.B. have entered into many such arrangements in the past without any objection being raised.

7. Another matter that requires to be cleared up is whether non-Congress members can join *khadi* boards as members.

A fact that has to be borne in mind is that the Ajmer P.C.C. is not now a very effective body. Its membership at present consists of 17 persons, indeed this is the full figure for Congress membership in the Rajputana province. The Ajmer P.C.C. representatives said that the yarn franchise was a great obstacle and they were unable to do any better under it.

At the discussions which took place at Mount Abu recently both the A.I.K.B. and the representatives of the Ajmer P.C.C. and Khadi Board made certain proposals regarding future work. These were in many cases in direct conflict with each other. Copies of them are attached.

The A.I.K.B. had no particular objection to the money or stocks being returned to them in three months' time. They were anxious however that future loss should not be incurred and suggested that in the event of any further delay occurring there should be no dealings which might result in loss.

About future work the A.I.K.B. suggested that the Ajmer Khadi Board should carry on its work to the best of its ability with the advice and assistance, where needed, of the A.I.K.B.; and at the same time the A.I.K.B. should work independently in some suitable part of Rajputana, both in organising a centre of production and depots for sale. Rajputana offers a very promising field for *khadi* work and little advantage has been taken of this so far. The Ajmer P.C.C. representatives were not agreeable to this suggestion or any suggestion involving independent work being done in Rajputana.

Jawaharlal Nehru

**31. To Madan Mohan Malaviya<sup>1</sup>**

107 Hewett Road  
Allahabad  
June 5th, 1925

Dear Sir,

I have to trouble you again on a subject about which I have written to you very often and at considerable length. The Punjab Relief Funds stand where they were in spite of the repeated resolutions of the Working Committee. You will remember that the funds were collected under the auspices of the Punjab Sub-committee of the A.I.C.C., a body directly subordinate and responsible to the All India Congress Committee. This Sub-committee looked after the funds and spent part of them. The balance[s] of all these funds are clearly the property of the A.I.C.C. The Working Committee has decided that all these balances should be paid to the A.I.C.C. and should be kept by the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F27/1925, pp. 83—85, N.M.M.L.

A.I.C.C. earmarked for helping deserving persons who have suffered from government oppression and tyranny and that the claims of the Punjab will have a priority in this matter. In the opinion of the Working Committee this would meet most nearly the object of the funds. May I know when I can expect you to transfer to the A.I.C.C. the balances of these funds which you hold either jointly with others or separately? The matter cannot go on undisposed of indefinitely. I would remind you in this connection that the money in the Imperial Bank of India, Allahabad Branch, is still in current account, and is drawing no interest.

I learn from the Punjab that there are still many deserving cases of persons who have suffered during the martial law regime and who require help. I am informed that applications for help were sent to the *Sewa Samiti* of Allahabad but no help was forthcoming. It would be eminently desirable to have one central fund, as suggested by the Working Committee, for the relief of sufferers from the oppression of Government and I would strongly urge that the *Sewa Samiti* do transfer all the Punjab relief funds in its possession to the A.I.C.C. which will undertake to earmark them in the manner suggested above. But quite apart from this question, it is very necessary that help should not be denied to any deserving Martial Law sufferer. The A.I.C.C. has received practically no part of the Punjab funds so far. The funds are with (1) you (2) *Sewa Samiti* of Allahabad (3) Pandit Santhanam —proceeds of the sale of martial law reports and (4) Mr. Jehangir B. Petit. I earnestly trust that you will kindly make arrangements for help to be given to all deserving cases. I am having a list prepared of such cases and can send it to you if you want it.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly ask your *Sewa Samiti* officials to send me full information about the Martial Law funds in their possession. How much did they bring over from the Punjab? How have they utilised it? Is it earmarked for any particular object or has it been put in the general funds? What is left now? Is any relief given to Martial Law sufferers now?

An early reply will oblige greatly.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

Copy forwarded to Pandit Motilal Nehru.

**32. To Mangal Singh<sup>1</sup>**

23.7.25

Dear Sir,<sup>2</sup>

As I was going to Calcutta for the meeting of the Working Committee I received a letter from the Secretary, Punjab P.C.C. informing me, *inter alia*, that he had issued a cheque to you for Rs. 13,223-12-1, being the balance of the money given by the A.I.C.C. for the relief of Akali Civil Resisters. As you know, your accounts of this fund and the question of further payment have been pending before the Working Committee for some time. The action of the Secretary, Punjab P.C.C. was thus unauthorised and I was very much surprised to learn of it. I telegraphed to him immediately and also took the liberty of sending you a telegram on the subject. I now learn from the Secretary, Punjab P.C.C. that although the cheque was issued it had not been cashed. Will you very kindly return this cheque to him so that it may be destroyed?

I have not heard from you yet in reply to my letter No. F 30-1724 dated 6th July. Nor have I received any report on the accounts from the Punjab P.C.C. In the absence of your reply and this report, it was difficult for the Working Committee to examine your accounts properly. They considered them however with some care and although they did not pass any formal resolution, they have directed me to convey to you their opinion on the subject. The accounts show that a large sum amounting to Rs. 29,840-3 is still with the *Jathedars* and unaccounted for. Even the auditor's certificate points out that this sum will be adjusted later when final accounts are received. This is obviously an unsatisfactory feature of the accounts and so long as the advances are not accounted for and audited properly the accounts are incomplete. You will therefore kindly take early steps to get this done and send the full audited accounts to this office as well as to the Punjab P.C.C. The question of further payment will then be considered.

You will also kindly let me have an answer to my letter of the 6th July.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 36/1924, pp. 77-79, N.M.M.L.
2. Sardar Mangal Singh (b. 1892), resigned from the Punjab Provincial Service and joined the noncooperation movement in 1920; was also one of the leaders of the Akali movement.

33. To Henri Barbusse<sup>1</sup>

28-7-1925

Dear Sir,

You must have learnt already of the honour that the British Government in India has done you by proscribing your *Bulletin*. The action of Government is the best proof of the fact that your committee's activities were becoming effective. Please accept our congratulations. You will perhaps appreciate a little better now the conditions under which we have to carry on in this country.

I have wondered lately why I have not received your *Bulletin* regularly. I have only received Nos. 1 and 5. I presume the other numbers were sent by you but were stopped by the authorities here. Presumably all copies of the *Bulletin* will now be stopped in the post and we shall not have a chance of seeing them. I trust you will not mind writing to me occasionally and telling us what your committee is doing.

With greetings and a grateful appreciation of your activities in the cause of Indian freedom.

I am,

Sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 33/1925, pp. 25—26, N.M.M.L.

34. To Chand Karan Sarda<sup>1</sup>

16-9-25

Dear Mr. Chand Karan Sarda,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter of the 9th together with its enclosures. I am afraid I cannot place your communication before the A.I.C.C., in its present form. Under the rules a member can move a formal resolution after giving due notice. I have no power to read long communications of the kind you have sent me to the committee. If you desire to circulate your note I would suggest that you have it printed and posted to A.I.C.C. members direct.

You must have seen the note on the "Alwar atrocities"<sup>3</sup> in *Young India* of July 23rd 1925. This will have informed you that the matter was considered by the Working Committee. If you want the Congress at Cawnpore to take any steps in regard to it the proper course would be to bring the subject to the notice of the A.I.C.C. members by circulation. A hurried reference to the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna, when members will be full of other matters, will do little good.

I am afraid I cannot answer your 12 questions within the limits of a letter. I would have to write an article to deal with them even briefly. But generally I may inform you that in my opinion the Congress has constitutionally every right to express an opinion or take action in regard to Indian States but the desirability of doing this must be judged in each individual case. A pious expression of opinion without the backing of some effective action does not carry one very far. At present the Congress is in difficulties in many ways and it can hardly take any effective action in the matter. I can quite understand and appreciate, however, the misery and unhappiness of the people who have to put up with tyranny and oppression.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 66/1925, pp. 51—52, N.M.M.L.

2. (1888-1957); President, Bar Association, Ajmer; took an active part in Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha activities; founder of *Sewa Samitis* in Rajasthan; suspended practice during the noncooperation movement and was imprisoned; worked with Swami Shraddhanand for Shuddhi movement.

3. The Thakur of Neemuchana in Alwar State refused in 1925 to pay revenue according to the enhanced rates. The army was called in and opened fire, killing about 150 persons.

35. To the Secretary, P.C.C. Ajmer<sup>1</sup>

Tilak Nagar,  
Cawnpore  
17-12-1925

Dear Sir,

I have not heard from you in reply to my telegram of the 14th December and my letter No. G 79-5359 of the same date. I arrived here today and the Secretary of the Reception Committee drew my attention to a list of delegates purporting to be the Ajmer list of delegates for the Congress which had come to his office accompanied by a covering letter dated Cawnpore 15th December 1925 signed by Mr. Janki P. Begerhotta<sup>2</sup> as Joint Secretary of the Ajmer P.C.C. It is not clear why this covering letter is dated Cawnpore. No address is given and I am thus unable to communicate with Mr. Janki P. Begerhotta in regard to it.

Most of the names in this list of delegates are those of residents of the United Provinces. Out of the 407 names supplied there appear to be 246 names of U. P. residents. Besides these there are a number of residents of other provinces e.g. Punjab, Behar, C. P., Andhra, Karnatak, Bengal and Bombay. You will agree with me, I trust, that these features in the list are somewhat unusual and warrant enquiry.

The Reception Committee inform me that they have been receiving information from almost every district in the province to the effect that those desiring to attend the Congress can do so by sending -/4/- to some person in Cawnpore who had constituted himself the agent of the Ajmer P.C.C. for the purpose of enrolling members. Attempts at enrolling members of the Reception Committee failed in many instances as the person approached was told by others that he need only send -/4/- to become an Ajmer delegate. In view of these facts and the unsatisfactory nature of the list of delegates submitted by your office the Reception Committee request that an enquiry be made forthwith so that it may be known soon whether the list sent is valid or not.

1. A.I.C.C. Unnumbered File.
2. Secretary, Rajasthan States' Peoples' Conference.

As the time is very limited I am sending Mr. Raghupati Sahai, the Under-Secretary of the A.I.C.C., to Ajmer by today's train to make personal enquiry into the matter. I have already informed you of this by telegram. You will kindly afford him every facility to carry on his investigation and place at his disposal all books and papers. In particular kindly show him your membership registers. Please also direct the Secretary of the Ajmer District Congress Committee to show him all books and papers, applications for membership, membership registers etc. Kindly also place before Mr. Raghupati Sahai all the information required by me in my letter No. G-79-5359 dated 14/12.

I should like you kindly to furnish me with answers to the following questions :

1. Is there any truth in the allegations made by the Reception Committee that a representative of yours has been trying to enrol members in the U.P.?
2. Why is your list dated Cawnpore December 15th 1925? Was it finally prepared in Cawnpore?
3. Have you opened an office in Cawnpore?
4. Are all the members, given in the list of delegates supplied, members of the Congress in your province? If so to which primary committee do they belong?
5. What do the various letters of the alphabet given under the column "district" signify, e.g. M.B.C.C., M.C.C.C., etc?
6. Some of the delegates in the list are described as members of the Delhi Congress or Cawnpore Congress. Are they also supposed to be members of some committee in Rajputana?
7. What were your Congress membership figures for the province and for each of the district committees at the end of October 1925 and also what are they now?
8. Is it a fact that most of the persons whose names are given in the list are new members? Have you received application forms from all of them?
9. Please name all your constituencies for electing delegates. Did you appoint returning officers for all of them? Were all candidates for election in the electoral roll of that constituency?
10. Was every one who sought election nominated in writing by 5 voters in the special form?

11. Were ballot papers issued? Please produce these papers as well as the reports of the returning officers.
12. Was an opportunity given to candidates to be present at the scrutiny of ballot papers?

I shall be obliged if you will give every assistance to Mr. Raghupati Sahai.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

Cawnpore has several lessons to teach us. As I have mentioned above the volunteers' desire for service was very obvious, but they were not efficient as units or as an organisation. In Belgaum the volunteers had a longer period of intensive training and on the whole they were smarter and more efficient than the Cawnpore volunteers. The reason for this

### 36. On the Ajmer D.C.C.<sup>1</sup>

The men at Cawnpore had received too little training and had very little opportunity of group training. The crisis, I believe, came at the last moment.

The Sava Dal, if it cares for its good name and its future progress must concentrate on efficiency even at the sacrifice of numbers. It must see to it that its officers and men by their bearing, discipline and efficiency stand up to the standards of other organisations.

20.12.25

Maulana Hasrat Mohani met members of Ajmer D.C.C. Ajmer D.C.C. meeting took place on 6.12.25 — 7 or 8 persons were present.

The 4 anna members elect a committee of 15. These 15 are the D.C.C. (both the general body and the Executive). The 4 anna members do nothing else. The 15 do everything including electing delegates. It was a meeting of these 15 on 6/12. They elected about 125 delegates — nearly all of them being local men.

Notice of the meeting was sent to all members including Chandulalji<sup>2</sup>.

No meeting of province except one on 2/12/(25) was held.

Under authority given by resolution of P.C.C. dated 2/12 Arjunlalji<sup>3</sup> enrolled delegates out of lists supplied by M. Hasrat Mohani and others in Kasganj etc.

1. A.I.C.C. Unnumbered File.
2. Chandulal Bhargava, a leading lawyer and a Congressman of Ajmer-Merwara who worked for the Home Rule League.
3. Arjunlal Sethi (1880-1941); a Congressman of Ajmer, who was suspected of terrorist activities and imprisoned, 1914-20.

The P.C.C. consists of the 15 Ajmer D.C.C. members who can coopt others. There is a rule that if a D.C.C. does not exist the remaining members of P.C.C. can coopt members to fill the vacancies. Total number of P.C.C. is 51. At present the P.C.C. consists of 31. The Ajmer D.C.C. members have coopted 16. Thus they can coopt 20 more to complete P.C.C.

If in the course of the year a dead committee wakes up and wants representation on the P.C.C. they will be told that they should wait till the annual elections.

Jawaharlal Nehru

questions :

1. Is there any truth in the allegations made by the Reception Committee that a representative of yours has been trying to control members in the U.P.?

### 37. Efficiency<sup>1</sup>

Have you opened an office in Cawnpore?

Are all the members, given in the list of delegates supplied, mem-

Acharya Gidwani in his speech at the Volunteer Conference at Cawnpore laid stress on our utilizing the volunteer movement for increasing national efficiency. It is well that this aspect of the question should be emphasised. In the past little importance has been attached to it and even now most of us are apt to overlook it. Volunteering has meant for us, and rightly so, the cultivation of a spirit of service. *Seva* is a part of the name of our organisation and *Seva* should always be the motto of a volunteer. This fact has been well recognised and it is pleasing to see large numbers of our young men full of the spirit of service offering themselves for national work. The recent example of Cawnpore is before us. We saw there hundreds of young men doing all manner of tasks, pleasant or unpleasant, congenial and uncongenial without protest or murmur. Delegates who had come from far distances were full of appreciation for their work.

But indiscriminate *Seva* is not enough. It must be organised and efficient. And a chief purpose of an organisation like the Hindustani Seva Dal is to make us more efficient and thereby to increase national efficiency.

1. *The Volunteer*, January 1926, p. 8.

Let us therefore now keep this ideal of efficiency before us. The last two years during which the Seva Dal has existed are full of lessons for us. To an outsider the progress made is very small. It is absurd to compare us with any military organisation or with even a well trained volunteer organisation. We are after all a set of amateurs trying to do the work that should usually be done by experts. Unkind critics make comparison between us and the University Training Corps and the comparison from the point of view of drill and smartness is much to our disadvantage. And yet I make bold to say that we have made substantial progress in the last two years. We have had to fight the apathy and utter indifference of our people and gradually we are making good.

Cawnpore has several lessons to teach us. As I have mentioned above the volunteers' desire for service was very obvious, but they were not efficient as units or as an organisation. In Belgaum the volunteers had a longer period of intensive training and on the whole they were smarter and more efficient than the Cawnpore volunteers. The reason for this difference is not far to seek. The men at Cawnpore had received less individual attention and had very little opportunity of group training. Some of the officers too, I believe, came at the last moment.

The Seva Dal, if it cares for its good name and its future progress, must concentrate on efficiency even at the sacrifice of numbers. It must see to it that its officers and men by their bearing, discipline and efficiency stand out wherever they may be placed. This can best be done by having camps in as many places as possible. I hope that during this year most of the provinces will have at least one such camp and by the time the next Congress takes place there will be healthy rivalry in efficiency and smartness between contingents from different provinces, and a real nucleus of a volunteer organisation will have been formed.

I may inform you that you are at liberty to collect funds for your organisation. These should be treated as part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund. There is no further difficulty in your way in obtaining the loan.

I may inform you that you are at liberty to collect funds for your organisation. These should be treated as part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund. There is no further difficulty in your way in obtaining the loan.

Yours truly,

S. A. Jaffer Ali  
GENERAL SECRETARY A.I.C.C.

## BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

### 38. To Umar Sobhani<sup>1</sup>

20 January 1924

My dear Umar,

I have just received your letter of the 17th January. I agree with you that the resolution of the Working Committee on the organisation of a central bureau for boycott of Empire goods is not very clear. The intention of course was that the Bombay P.C.C. should advance the money to the Working Committee and not to the Boycott Committee. The resolution is also vague as to what sum is to be given to your committee direct from our fund, and what is to be advanced by the Bombay P.C.C. The Working Committee, however, discussed the matter and favoured the immediate grant of Rs. 1,000 to you from our funds; so that the Bombay P.C.C. is to advance Rs. 9,000 if they agree to it. On the basis of this I have asked Mr. Velji L. Nappoo<sup>2</sup>, the treasurer, to pay you Rs. 1,000, and I have requested the Bombay P.C.C. to advance Rs. 9,000.

I am writing to the Secretary, Bombay P.C.C. to make it clear that the advance will be to the Working Committee.

I hope to be in Bombay on the 29th.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 9, N.M.M.L.

2. A leading social worker of Bombay who was treasurer of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and also, for a short while in 1921 and again in 1924, treasurer of the A.I.C.C.

39. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Bombay<sup>1</sup>

20 January 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already informed you of the resolution of the Working Committee in regard to the formation of a central bureau for the boycott of Empire goods. This resolution reads as follows : "Resolved that Rs. 10,000 be budgeted for the Central Bureau for 6 months and such part of it as can be sent immediately be sent, and that the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee be requested to advance the sum, and that the Boycott Committee be informed that no bigger sum can at present be provided for having regard to our finances."

Some doubt appears to have arisen as to who will borrow the money from the Bombay P.C.C. — the Boycott Committee or the Working Committee. I should like to make it clear that the money will be advanced to the Working Committee by the Bombay P.C.C. I trust that you will be able to advance a sum of Rs. 9,000 and will give this to Mr. Umar Sobhani, Convener, Boycott Committee.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy forwarded to treasurer for information.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 11, N.M.M.L.

40. To Umar Sobhani<sup>1</sup>

10 February 1924

Dear Sir,  
I have already sent you a copy of the resolution passed by the Working Committee in regard to the loan to be taken from the Bombay P.C.C. for the work of the Empire Goods Boycott Committee. I trust there is no further difficulty in your way in obtaining the loan.

I may inform you that you are at liberty to collect funds for your work but all these monies should be treated as part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, earmarked if necessary for the particular purpose.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 17, N.M.M.L.

**41. To Umar Sobhani<sup>1</sup>**

29 April 1924

Dear Sir,

I have received Rs. 9,000 from the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee as a loan to the A.I.C.C. for the work of the Empire Goods Boycott Committee. I have not heard from you about this committee for a long time and do not know what the committee has done since the Coconada Congress and what it proposes to do. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have a brief report. Do you require this amount of Rs. 9,000? Has any directory of Swadeshi goods been prepared? I shall be obliged if you will kindly send an early answer.

Yours truly,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 33, N.M.M.L.

**42. To Umar Sobhani<sup>1</sup>**

21-8-1924

Dear Sir,

I have had no answer from you to my letters dated 29th April, 15th May and 18th June, 1924. I presume that little is being done for the Boycott of Empire Goods and the sum of Rs. 9,000 asked for by you is not now needed by your committee. We have held this money for you for the last four months but you have not taken the trouble to take it from us. The money had been borrowed by us from the Bombay P.C.C. specially for you. If you do not require it, we might pay the money back to the Bombay P.C.C.

If no work is being done or has been done by the Empire Goods Boycott Committee, then you have probably not utilised the Rs. 1,000 granted to your committee in January last. Will you kindly let me know if this is so?

Yours truly,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

43. To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C.<sup>1</sup>

22-8-1924

Dear Sir,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Mr. Umar Sobhani, Convenor, Empire Goods Boycott Committee. Whatever his answer may be, I propose that the money we have borrowed from the Bombay P.C.C. should be returned to them. We can afford to do so. I shall put up the matter before the next Working Committee.

Yours truly,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 41, N.M.M.L.

Please keep me informed of developments.

THE AKALI MOVEMENT

44. To A.T. Gidwani<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

25-1-1924

My dear Gidwani,

Thanks for your letter. I have just come back from Benares and I hasten to answer it. I shall take your letter with me to the Working Committee meeting and shall write to you fully after consulting the other members. I shall also endeavour to have more money sent to you.

I am glad you have got a decent office fixed up. I hope work will proceed smoothly now and you will be able to devote yourself more to thinking and organising and less to the clerical part.

I am surprised to learn from your letter about the allegation that Lala Lajpat Rai had written to anyone and advised against helping Akalis. I had not heard of this before and I find it difficult to believe. I discussed the Akali question with a number of persons besides the members of the Working Committee and no one ever hinted at any such thing. I feel sure the information is incorrect.

As for giving financial assistance to the Akalis, the question was fully discussed at the meeting of the Working Committee. Sardar Mangal Singh was present. The position is this. The Congress is hard up. Neither the A.I.C.C. nor most of the P.C.C.s have any money. Our P.C.C. has got just Rs. 20 in the bank. In despair I left every other work and went to Benares to collect money. Thus our first business is collection of funds. How can we grant any big sum to the Akalis when we have not got it? Your suggestion that we should fix a sum and collect it is attended with danger. I do not like fixing sums lest we fail to get it. And then collecting money for different funds is not desirable and will create confusion. It was therefore decided to make every effort to get money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and then to make a grant out of it to the Akalis.

I do not think it is quite fair to the Congress to accuse it of lack of earnestness in regard to the Akalis. What else can it do? You know

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, pp. 57—60, N.M.M.L.

well the position we are in. It is full of hope and yet it is confusing. Our capacity to help others depends upon our efficiency and organisation, and thus our immediate concern has become the reorganisation of the Congress. The Akalis are spending — largely on the defence — a sum of over Rs. 60,000 a month. Suppose the Congress gave Rs. 50,000 and that is more than it possesses today — how far would it go? I am afraid there is a great deal of loose thinking in regard to this matter. The greatest help that the Congress can give to the Sikhs is to perfect its own organisation and throw in its whole weight at the moment of crisis. Meanwhile we should help them with full publicity etc. as you are doing. These are of course my own views.

I wish you would arrange to send occasional exhortations and communiqües to the various Provincial Congress Committees. If you keep pegging away at them they will do something. Please send me if possible all your communiqües.

I am interested to learn that the Lawrence Statue<sup>3</sup> is again coming into its own. Please keep me informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

There appears to be little chance of my arrest for the *Kumbh Mela* affray<sup>4</sup>. Worse luck!

Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The statue of Sir John Lawrence, set up in Lahore in 1887, had on it the inscription : "Will you be governed by pen or sword?" This was considered to be an insult to the people and the continuous agitation against it led to its replacement by the inscription : "By the pen and the sword I rule you."
4. This refers to the incident at the *Sangam* when Pandit Malaviya, Jawaharlal and others defied the authorities and courted arrest. The officials, however, took no action.

#### 45. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
7th February 1924

Dear Sir,

I give below extracts from the proceedings of the Working Committee which met at Bombay on 1.2.24 :—

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, p. 65. N.M.M.L.

"Mr. A. T. Gidwani made a statement about Hindu-Sikh relations in the Punjab. It was resolved that the Punjab P.C.C. be asked to take steps to adjust the differences amicably and if necessary to appoint a committee for this purpose in consultation with the Shiromani Gur-dwara Prabandhak Committee."

"Mr. Gidwani also made a statement about the oppression being carried on in the Doaba<sup>2</sup> in the Punjab. Resolved that the Punjab P.C.C. be requested to report to the Working Committee on the situation in the Doaba and on the steps they are taking to deal with it."

I trust that you will take early steps to adjust the Hindu-Sikh differences and intimate the fact to me, and request that you will send me a report on the Doaba. I hope your report will reach me in time to enable me to place it before the Working Committee which meets in Delhi on the 26th February, 1924.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
General Secretary

2. This refers to the police repression and military marches in the Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts where there had been some terrorist activity by a group of Akalis known as the Babar Akalis.

#### 46. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>

10 February 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already communicated to you some resolutions of the Working Committee relating to the Punjab. As you are doubtless aware, Hindu-Sikh relations in Amritsar and the rest of the Punjab are far from desirable and this must of necessity injure the national cause. It has already deprived us of much of the good of the Akali civil disobedience. The Working Committee attaches the greatest importance to this matter and feels that the best service it can render to the Akalis, and indeed to the Punjab at present, is to remove this friction between two communities who have so very much in common. All other help that the committee may render to the Akalis is almost useless if Hindu-Sikh relations are not put on a proper basis. We have had enough trouble over Hindu-Muslim relations and the Punjab of all provinces has suffered the most. It will be disastrous if the virus

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, pp. 69-72. N.M.M.L.

spreads still further and embitters the relations of other communities also. The Working Committee feel that every effort should be made to put an end forthwith to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. The dispute is largely, so far as they can make out, one of prestige and an honest and sustained effort for peace is sure to succeed. The best persons to make this effort are obviously local people conversant with the ins and outs of the various matters in dispute. The Working Committee would therefore request you to explore every avenue of reaching a settlement. Perhaps it would be desirable for you and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to nominate a small committee of Hindus & Sikhs to discuss and settle everything. I am given to understand that the S.G.P.C. is perfectly willing to do so and to abide by the decision of any such committee.

2. The second matter to which the Working Committee would draw your attention is the oppression in the Doaba. Last year your committee, I believe, took some steps to give special publicity to this. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know what your committee has so far done and what it proposes to do in future. The situation is too serious for us to ignore it.

3. The Working Committee has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 25,000 for helping the families of Akalis going to jail for offering civil disobedience. Of this sum Rs. 3,000 has been sent by the Burma P.C.C. for this special purpose. The balance of Rs. 22,000 is out of a fund earmarked for civil disobedience. This money will be sent to your committee, so that your committee will utilise it for the purpose specified in consultation with the S.G.P.C. Rs. 3,000 will be sent in a few days, if it has not already been sent; the rest—Rs. 22,000 will be sent towards the end of the month as it will be in fixed deposit with a bank till then.

I hope you will consult the S.G.P.C. in all these three matters. Mr. Gidwani of course will be in Amritsar and I am sure he will be only too pleased to give you all the assistance in his power.

May I again beg of you to do your utmost to remove all communal friction? Now that Mahatmaji is out we can no longer afford to let matters drift.

I shall be glad if you will place this letter before your Council or Executive Committee and keep me informed of the steps you take.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Sri K. Santanam.

47. To A.T. Gidwani<sup>1</sup>

18 February 1924

My dear Gidwani,

Thanks for your letter of the 13th. The resolutions dealing with the Akalis were sent to the Punjab P.C.C. on the 8th February. I followed this up with a longish letter on the subject sent on the 10th February to the Secretary, P.P.C.C. and to Santanam. I suppose they must have reached the office of the committee just after the meeting of the 10th.

I have just received your press message about the march of the *Shahidi Jatha*. I envy you on your march with them. I notice that the only U.P. paper you send your messages to is the *Aaj*. I wish you could send them to the *Leader* also as it reaches a large number of people in the province. But perhaps it will not pay for the messages. The Urdu *Hamdam* of Lucknow has also a good circulation amongst the Urdu knowing people.

I suppose you know that the Working Committee meets on the 26th at Dr. Ansari's house at 4 p.m. If you want them to consider the Akali situation you had better attend the meeting. Please also send me your budget and accounts.

Your note paper is headed "Akali Sahayak Bureau".<sup>2</sup> There is no reference to the Congress in it. Do you not think that the name of the Congress should be kept very much in the forefront?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1), 1924, pp. 81-82. N.M.M.L.

2. In November 1923 the Congress Working Committee had decided to set up an office to assist the Akalis in their struggle.

48. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>

1 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already sent you the resolution of the Working Committee on the Akali situation. I trust you will take immediate action on this resolution. It is hardly necessary for me to point out to you that delay will prejudice our cause. It is possible that Mr. G. Joseph may be delayed in taking charge of the publicity arrangements. I would request you to send a competent person to carry on the publicity at Amritsar pending Mr. Joseph's arrival. Please also arrange to start the enquiry into the Jaito firing<sup>2</sup>. As I have stated already this does not mean that you should necessarily come into conflict with Government. It is clear that your representatives will not be allowed in Nabha territory. It is not necessary for them at this stage at any rate to try to enter prohibited areas. A great deal of information can be gathered from the many eye witnesses etc. who must be in Amritsar and the neighbourhood. The S.G.P.C. is I believe recording statements but I doubt if sufficient care is taken to sift the truth from a mass of exaggerations. What is required is cross-examination of witnesses to find out what they say from personal knowledge and what from hearsay. I do not think this work will take more than a few days. Please keep me informed of the situation. You will of course remain in close touch with the S.G.P.C. and do everything in consultation with them.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1), 1924, pp. 113—14. N.M.M.L.
2. On 21 February 1924 the police opened fire at Jaito (in Nabha) on a crowd that had collected to worship and to protest against the deposition of the Maharaja. It was reported that 150 persons had been killed and about 55 wounded.

49. To George Joseph<sup>1</sup>

My dear George,

2 March 1924

Your telegram<sup>2</sup> came as a great disappointment. It has upset all our arrangements and at a critical stage. The Akali situation is developing at a tremendous pace and it is most necessary for a responsible Congressman to remain in constant touch with them. Publicity work in Amritsar is important, but far more important is the constant touch with the Sikh leaders. No Punjabee is suitable for this work and we must find an outsider. Well, I suppose we must face the difficulty.

I am so sorry to learn of your wife's ill-health. I hope it is nothing serious and that she will recover soon. Please convey my regards to her.

Your books are still with me. What shall I do with them?

Yours affly,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1), 1924, p. 125-A, N.M.M.L.

2. Joseph had regretted his inability to go to Amritsar because of his wife's ill-health.

50. To C. Rajagopalachari<sup>1</sup>

12/3/1924

My dear Mr. Rajagopalachari,

Mohamad Ali showed me your telegram<sup>2</sup> to him about the Akali Sahayak Bureau. He was going to wire to you in reply, even without consulting me, to the effect that I could not go. I confess to some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 175. N.M.M.L.

2. In this telegram Rajagopalachari apparently suggested that Jawaharlal as General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. should himself go to Amritsar to look after the Akali Sahayak Bureau.

surprise at seeing your telegram. I happen to have quite enough engagements, which are perhaps even more important than domestic entanglements. It is utterly impossible for me to go. Joseph's inability to go, coupled with our inability to make some other proper arrangements, has done us a lot of harm. But there is no help for it. At my request the Punjab P.C.C. have made some temporary arrangement to carry on publicity work in Amritsar.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 51. To Sampurnanand<sup>1</sup>

12 March 1924

My dear Sampurnanandji,<sup>2</sup>

You must know that the Working Committee put Gidwani in charge of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau at Amritsar. On Gidwani's arrest at Jaito, the committee appointed Joseph to take his place, but Joseph has been unable to go owing to his wife's illness. We are in great difficulty as to whom to send and the work is most important and cannot wait. Some temporary arrangements have been made by the Punjab P.C.C. Is it possible for you to go? It has just struck me that perhaps you might be able to go for a while and I am therefore writing to you before suggesting your name to any one else. If you agree I shall propose your name to Mohamad Ali who as President must do the needful.

The work consists of (1) ordinary publicity work—issuing communiques etc. to the press (2) remaining in close touch with the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and (3) for the present getting statements of eye witnesses etc. of the Jaito tragedy. All this work must be done in Amritsar as quietly as possible without any fuss or show. You are not supposed to invite arrest but of course if arrest comes your way it can hardly be helped.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(i) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 177—78. N.M.M.L.
2. (1891-1969); elected member A.I.C.C. in 1922 and thrice Secretary U.P.C.C.; Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh 1955-1960; Governor of Rajasthan 1962-1967. Sampurnanand had a deep interest in astrology.

If you agree to go and if Mohamad Ali has made no other arrangement, I should like you to come here for a day to discuss work there. You should be prepared to go for at least a month, and to go soon. The Congress will of course pay you your expenses and a subsistence allowance. Please send a wire to me signifying your assent or otherwise. I may add that there is a good office of the Bureau in Amritsar in charge of a competent assistant.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**52. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
12/3/24

My dear Bapuji,  
I received your telegram late this evening on my return home. It was a great pleasure to hear from you again after such a long time. I have not dared to intrude by another visit or by letter during your convalescence. But your telegram emboldens me.

I have just wired to you in reply and have also sent a telegram to Mohamad Ali. I did not wish to trouble him so soon after his bereavement<sup>2</sup> but I thought it was due to him to know about your telegram.

I have known Panikkar by repute for several years and I met him for a short time in Cocanada. I am sure, his presence will be very useful in Amritsar. His ignorance of Hindustani will be a drawback but this will be more than compensated by his other attainments. He will be an excellent man for publicity work. Perhaps, owing to his language difficulty, he might not be very helpful in bringing the Sikhs & Hindus nearer to each other. But on the whole Panikkar will be an acquisition in Amritsar.

As regards terms anything that you consider reasonable will surely be agreed to by all others. Technically the Working Committee appoints but the committee will not meet till the 21st April. The terms

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 8474.
2. Maulana Mohamad Ali's daughter, Amna, died on 11 March 1924.

suggested in your telegram are rather complicated but that is for you to decide. I am glad to notice that Panikkar contemplates a lengthy stay at Amritsar. Personally I doubt if it will be necessary for him to stay for many months. There is just a possibility of Gidwani coming out sooner and an equal possibility of Gidwani's successor going in. Of course Panikkar will not unnecessarily invite jail, but neither did Gidwani.

Owing to Joseph's inability to go I requested the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to make temporary arrangements to carry on the work at Amritsar. Only this morning I heard from them that they had appointed a certain gentleman, whom I do not know, to take charge of the work. This was of course a temporary arrangement only.

If Panikkar decides to go to Amritsar and if it is not inconvenient for him, he might spend a day here on his way up. Perhaps I might be able to give him some useful information. I shall be away from the 15th to the 20th.

With regards,

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**53. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>**

13 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 10th March.

I have just had a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi suggesting that Mr. Panikkar, till lately editor of the *Swarajya* in Madras, be put in charge of the work in Amritsar. Mahatmaji of course did not know that some arrangements have already been made. I have wired and written to Mahatmaji leaving the matter in his hands. I have also consulted the President. I shall write to you again on the subject as soon as I hear from Mahatmaji or the President.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 181. N.M.M.L.

54. To Maulana Mohamad Ali<sup>1</sup>

14 March, 1924

My dear Mohamad Ali,

I have your telegram about Panikkar. I have also heard from Mahatmaji that Panikkar will leave Bombay for Amritsar on Sunday night. I would have liked to see him before he went but this would mean the loss of several days as I am going to Gorakhpur tomorrow. Time is more important than an interview and I have therefore asked him to proceed straight.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to the Secretary Punjab P.C.C. Owing to my insistence that some temporary arrangement should be made for the Akali Sahayak Bureau, they appointed Pt. Karam Chand<sup>2</sup>. As it happened, immediately after his appointment Panikkar's name was suggested by Mahatmaji and the Punjab committee's arrangements have been upset. I have written a soothing letter and cast the responsibility chiefly on you! I feel Panikkar will do good work in Amritsar.

I am issuing the following press statement :

"In view of Mr. George Joseph's inability to go to Amritsar owing to his wife's illness, Maulana Mohamad Ali, President of the All India Congress Committee, has in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi appointed Mr. Panikkar to take charge of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Mr. Panikkar is an M.A. (first class honours) of Oxford, was a professor at the Muslim University, Aligarh and has till lately been the editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras. Mr. Panikkar is proceeding to Amritsar almost immediately."

I am going to Gorakhpur tomorrow evening for four days.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 201—202. N.M.M.L.

2. Pandit Karam Chand Shukla, a journalist of Ferozepur; editor of the daily *Bande Matram*.

55. To Karam Chand Shukla<sup>1</sup>

14 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th March. The Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C. had also informed me that you had kindly consented to take charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Just about this time however Mahatma Gandhi suggested the name of Mr. Panikkar, lately editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras, for the Bureau and the President Maulana Mohamad Ali has asked him to go to Amritsar. I am very sorry that the arrangements made by the Punjab P.C.C. should so soon have been upset and specially that you should have been put to inconvenience. Now that you are in Amritsar, I trust that you will remain there till Mr. Panikkar comes and discuss the whole situation with him. He will be a stranger to the province and to the work and you will no doubt be able to explain much to him. I have written fully to the Secretary Punjab P.C.C.

Mr. Panikkar leaves Bombay for Amritsar on Sunday night.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 203. N.M.M.L.

56. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>

14/3/24

Dear Sir,

I mentioned to you yesterday that Mahatmaji had suggested that Mr. Panikkar, till lately editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras, be put in charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Maulana Mohamad Ali, President A.I.C.C. has accepted this suggestion and has asked Mr. Panikkar to proceed to Amritsar. I have just received a letter from

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 207—210. N.M.M.L.

Pandit Karam Chand informing me that he has taken charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau under instructions from you. I am very sorry that just as Pandit Karam Chand had taken the trouble to go to Amritsar and take charge, new arrangements should be made for the bureau. I am sure Pt. Karam Chand's presence at Amritsar would have been of great use and that he would have carried on the work entrusted to him with ability and success. In view of Mahatmaji's suggestion however, the President thought it desirable to entrust the work to Mr. Panikkar. You will kindly, I hope, explain the position to Mr. Karam Chand and offer my apologies to him for the trouble he has been put to. I do not think it will be necessary for Pandit Karam Chand and Mr. Panikkar both to remain in the Bureau. For the present however Pt. Karam Chand might kindly stay on till Mr. Panikkar arrives. He is due to leave Bombay on Sunday night the 16th. After his arrival the situation should be considered fully by Mr. Panikkar in consultation with your representatives and the representatives of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. Pandit Karam Chand would no doubt be in a position to explain the situation to Mr. Panikkar.

2. After that the immediate work should be an informal enquiry into the Jaito firing. I am afraid your committee has entirely misunderstood the decision of the Working Committee. No formal enquiry, all India or otherwise, is asked for at this stage. We purposely wish to avoid a cumbrous and lengthy enquiry and we do not want a large number of men to carry it out. All that is required is that two or three competent persons should spend a few days in Amritsar personally examining and cross-examining such eye-witnesses of the firing etc. as may be available. They will draw up a short temporary report giving their impressions and conclusions on the more or less imperfect data supplied. This report will be considered by the Working Committee and if it then considers necessary a formal enquiry committee may be appointed. The report will be a private document unless the Working Committee decides otherwise. There should be no difficulty in your assisting in this work. The delay that has occurred already is unfortunate but even now something should be done. I notice that the S.G.P.C. have issued a small pamphlet about the Jaito firing.

3. I have noted that you are paying an allowance to Pt. Durga Das Vaid<sup>2</sup> out of the Akali Relief Fund. I have referred the matter to the President.

2. Of Ferozepur district; a leading Congressman imprisoned in 1922 and 1924.

4. There is apparently some difficulty in drawing money from the bank for the Akali Sahayak Bureau as it stands in the name of Mr. Gidwani. I shall be obliged if you will kindly advance Mr. Panikkar any sum up to Rs. 1,000 in case he requires it. This money will be sent to you by me as soon as you ask for it. I do not know how to send money direct to Mr. Panikkar.

5. With reference to your request for a "substantial grant for the uplift of the Depressed Classes" I regret to inform you that the financial condition of the A.I.C.C. is not such as to enable it to make any substantial grant. However if you wish it I shall put up your request at the meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**57. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
27/3/1924

Dear Panikkar,

I have your letter. I have been wanting to write to you for some time but it is not easy to write about some matters. A talk would have been more satisfactory. Owing to my absence from Allahabad however I did not think it worthwhile to delay your departure for Amritsar.

I suppose you have picked up the threads already and require little outside help. You need not send frequent reports. All your communiqües should be sent to me and they will keep me informed of your activities. You might also from time to time send me a personal letter giving any special news which has not appeared in the press. This should specially be done before a meeting of the Working Committee. It is really for you to consider when and what to write to me

<sup>1</sup> A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 237-239. N.M.M.L.

or to Mohamad Ali. We should of course be kept in touch with developments.

Gidwani had obtained authority for sending press messages from a large number of newspapers and he could thus send his communique etc to them by telegram free of cost. He also used to send weekly letters to the papers.

You are a journalist and I can hardly give you any tips as to how to carry on the publicity work most effectively. We have to give as much publicity as possible to the correct facts of the Akali agitation. We have also specially to keep the political side of it, and the side which affects the other communities, well in the forefront.

You have already noticed the unfriendly feeling between Hindus & Sikhs. If possible you should try to induce the various Hindu & Sikh newspapers to refrain from hurting each other. I believe that it is certainly possible for the two communities to come to an amicable understanding. Both of them want to put an end to the present undesirable state of affairs but each is afraid of lowering its prestige by taking the first step. I wish a private and informal conference of a few Sikhs & Hindus might take place. This would be helpful.

I hope you are proceeding with the Jaito enquiry. This should be finished as soon as possible. It should not of course be superficial but at the same time it need not be very detailed.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**58. To K. M. Panikkar:**

April 2, 1924

My dear Panikkar,

Thanks for the Jaito report. I am sending a copy to Mohamad Ali for his directions as to whether it should be published or not. I shall let you know as soon as I hear from him. You state in the report more than once that "the crowd was absolutely unarmed except for

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 167-69. N.M.M.L.

the possession of *lathis*". Surely the crowd had *kirpans* and some of these *kirpans* are indistinguishable from swords. Also there were apparently some *Chavis*. In view of these facts is not your statement too sweeping? I am sending copies of your report to all members of the Working Committee and to Mahatmaji. I am sorry to learn that you received no help from Sardar Mangal Singh or from Santanam.

I am glad to learn of your methods of work. As I said before so far as publicity is concerned, I cannot be of much help to you in offering suggestions. You know far more of it than I do.

I am inclined to think that you are right in saying that the Hindus in Amritsar are narrow-minded and are taking up an undesirable attitude. Still I think this is not the sole cause of the bad relations between the two communities. The Sikhs have been largely to blame. There have been times when a generous word or gesture from them would have brought over the Hindus to them. But they did not care to make it. Their movement is largely a separatist movement so far as religion is concerned and this has naturally reacted in the social and political sphere. The almost general belief amongst the Hindus that the Akalis are arrogant and in their pride do not care for the feelings and sentiments of the Hindus is not without foundation. Sikhs have not been keen enough to win the Hindus in spite of their professions. The bitterness of the Hindu against the Sikh and the Muslim is chiefly due to the realisation of his utter weakness and humiliation, and being narrow-minded and bigoted this bitterness instead of urging him to better himself or make himself stronger turns to hatred and curses. Unhappily Amritsar does not contain any Hindu leaders of note and in this respect one can sympathise with the Sikhs. They have no one to go to.

The latter part of your letter is interesting. If any important developments are likely to occur, it might be advisable for you to come over to Bombay. I would like to see you in any event but expense is a consideration. I have asked Mohamad Ali. I think you had better judge for yourself whether it is necessary for you to come. The Working Committee meets at Bombay in Shankerlal Bunker's house in Choupatty on April 23rd at 3 p.m.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

59. To S. D. Kitchlew<sup>1</sup>

Juhu  
27/4/24

My dear Kitchlew,

As you know the Working Committee have accepted Sardar Amar Singh Jhabbal's<sup>2</sup> resignation from the National Pact Committee<sup>3</sup> and have resolved to request the S.G.P.C. to suggest the name of another Sikh gentleman to serve on this committee. I have written to the S.G.P.C. but my letter is not likely to reach them. If it reaches them they will probably keep up their reputation and not answer it. I would therefore like you or Panikkar to see them or write to them about this matter and get their answer so that we may know where we are.

Far more important than the National Pact Committee however is the question of the future of the Akali Sahayak Bureau. You know the position well. It is clear that the present tendency of the S.G.P.C. is anything but desirable. Their treatment of the Congress Bureau, their secretiveness and their desire not to get mixed up in any way with the Congress is not very courteous to the Congress. It almost appears that we are thrusting ourselves and our help when it is neither wanted nor appreciated. You know that the Working Committee was definitely of opinion that under the circumstances the Akali Sahayak Bureau should be closed and the money withdrawn. But the committee did not wish to take any hasty action which might do injury to the Akalis and so they passed a resolution requesting you "to enquire and report as to the advisability of closing the Sahayak Bureau and taking back the money advanced". Will you kindly enquire into the matter on your return to Amritsar and send me a brief report? You

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp. 343-44. N.M.M.L.
2. (1888-1962); joined Congress in 1919; President, Central Sikh League, 1923; started a weekly paper, *Desh Bhagat*, 1924; President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 1927; a 'dictator' of the Akali Dal, 1933-36; was imprisoned several times for participating in the nationalist movement.
3. Dr. Ansari and Lala Lajpat Rai had proposed that all the communities sign an Indian National Pact, with complete swaraj as the objective and providing for full religious liberty, no preference to any particular religious denomination, protection to minorities and communal representation in all the legislatures.

will of course see some of the present responsible heads of the S.G.P.C. and explain to them what the Working Committee intends doing and the reasons for it.

As regards the money given for helping civil resisters this should not be handed over to the S.G.P.C. but should be given direct to the person needing it.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Syt. K. M. Panikkar for information.

**60. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>**

Juhu  
30/4/24

My dear Panikkar,

I am so sorry I missed you. I sent you yesterday copy of a letter I have sent to Kitchlew. I have also spoken to him about it. I feel that there must be a straight talk with the officers of the S.G.P.C. and the consequences of their action must be clearly pointed out. I hope you will be present when Kitchlew meets the S.G.P.C. people.

I have read through your letters to Mahatmaji. I feel that we are to blame partly for allowing the situation to drift and not taking steps earlier to define our position and that of the Akalis etc.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to the Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C. I am writing to him to hold on to the Rs. 25,000 or such part of it as is left, and only to give help out of it direct to the sufferers after full scrutiny by the committee appointed for the purpose. The greater part of the money had better be kept in fixed deposit.

I wanted to speak to you before you left about the preparation of a historical sketch of the noncooperation movement. I think that some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii)/1924, pp. 345-48. N.M.M.L.

such work is needed both in India & abroad. The work would deal more with the sweep of the movement and its essentials rather than with details. I think you would be just the person to do the work. There are two ways of doing it. One is to edit a collection of essays on different aspects of the movement by a number of leading authorities with a general introduction giving a historical sketch. The other way is for one person to write the whole work. Mahatmaji prefers the latter method. I discussed this subject with him. He did not show any great enthusiasm but he agreed that it might be of some use and he further agreed that you would be the right person for it. I understand from Kitchlew that you would like the idea of being entrusted with such work. Please let me have your ideas on the subject.

For the present you must have your hands full. I do not know how long you are likely to be busy with the Sahayak Bureau. But even now you can start collecting material for your work.

Please remember that you have to issue to the press an abstract of your Jaito report.

In case the Sahayak Bureau has to be closed the furniture etc. you have collected will have to be disposed of. Some of it, e.g. the duplicator, might be sent to the office in Allahabad. Please send me a full list of the furniture in the Bureau.

I propose to go to Allahabad in another week.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**61. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>**

Juhu  
30 April 1924

Dear Sir,

Your letter No. 1860 dated 23rd April has been forwarded to me here. I understand that a similar letter has been sent by you to Mahatma Gandhi. I have had the advantage of discussing the matter with Mahatmaji and although this letter has not been seen by him it conveys generally his ideas on the subject.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp. 351-53. N.M.M.L.

There is absolutely no prohibition against the participation by the Congress even in avowedly religious activities. No special sanction is necessary to take part in such activities, but it is for the local committee to decide whether having regard to the circumstances it is proper and expedient to do so. Of course, where such activities are opposed to the principles of the Congress or to our methods, or where they might lead to friction between different communities, then it will be desirable to hold aloof. But it is incorrect to say, as is mentioned in your letter, that the Congress cannot take part in such activities without transgressing its rules. Even if the Congress had not expressed its sympathy with many of the activities of the Akalis it would have been open to you, if you considered it fit and proper having regard to local conditions, to participate in the welcome to this *Jatha*. The Congress has not identified itself with the Sikh movement or the methods employed by the Akalis nor does it necessarily approve of all the objects as declared from time to time by the S.G.P.C. and its responsible members. Nonetheless the Congress has sympathised with the movement and has gone to the length of helping it indirectly. Apart from local conditions, therefore, it would ordinarily appear to be the right thing to join in welcoming and helping the *Jatha*. The fact that the S.G.P.C. is an illegal association should on the whole incline Congressmen and Congress Committees to help it rather than otherwise.

There is thus no principle or rule of the Congress which prevents us from helping and cheering the *Shahidi Jatha* on its way. But it is quite possible that the local conditions may be such that any aggressive activity may not produce wholesome results. Of this the local committee must be the sole judge. For instance, such help may create communal tension or increase it, or the people in the locality may be too timid to do much and hence an appeal from the Congress may fall flat.

It appears from your letter that this matter was informally discussed by some Congressmen. It would be desirable if an important matter of this kind was considered by a formal committee meeting.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Syt. K. M. Panikkar for information.

62. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

16/3/24

My dear Panikkar,

My stay in Juhu<sup>2</sup> was unduly prolonged and I only returned yesterday. I have seen your letters of the 3rd, 4th & 5th May.

I appreciate the reasons advanced by you for having one connected account of all Congress activities rather than a collection of essays by different persons. I did not suggest that we should adopt the latter course. What I mentioned in a previous letter was, I think, that a connected narrative should be supplemented by special essays. In any event, we must have a good historical account and this can only be written by one person and not by a number. The idea of having any essays is confusing and might be abandoned for the present. We should concentrate on the "history" and I am glad the work of taking this in hand appeals to you.

I mentioned this matter to the Working Committee in Juhu and although there was no resolution there appeared to be general agreement that the work should be done. Mahatmaji, although not overkeen on the subject, approved of your doing it. I think, therefore that you need not wait for the formal sanction of the Working Committee and can start work immediately.

I am sending you a copy of the report of the Civil Disobedience Committee<sup>3</sup>. Please get a copy of the report and evidence of the Congress Martial Law Enquiry Committee from the Punjab P.C.C. I have written to them about it. Some of the other books required by you are in my office and I may be able to send them to you. I shall write to you about them later.

I am sorry to learn about the state of the accounts. I suppose we must wait patiently for Gidwani's discharge.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp. 371-72. N.M.M.L.
2. Where Mahatma Gandhi was convalescing.
3. The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee; was appointed by the Congress in June 1922, with Hakim Ajmal Khan as its Chairman and Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Ansari, Rajagopalachari and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as its members, to advise whether a reorientation of the Congress programme was necessary. The committee came to the conclusion that the country was not ready for civil disobedience on a large scale, but limited mass civil disobedience on the responsibility of Provincial Congress Committees could be permitted.

63. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad

20/5/24

My dear Panikkar,

I have your letter of the 16th May. I am glad to learn of the new elections to the S.G.P.C. Certainly it would be inadvisable to close the Bureau at this stage. It is for Kitchlew and you to report accordingly to the President. Some of the relief money might also be judiciously distributed subject to the condition that the relief is given directly to the sufferers by your Bureau.

I have already written to you about the writing of the history of the noncooperation movement. I can quite appreciate the difficulties you will have to face and indeed I do not envy you your job.

Regarding the books, you must have received the Congress report on the Punjab atrocities and the Civil Disobedience report. I am now sending you the Hunter Report<sup>2</sup> and the Report of the Ahmedabad and Gaya Congresses. The reports of the Calcutta and Cocanada sessions are not yet out and the Nagpur report although recently published has not been received by this office. I am trying to collect the other books wanted by you and I hope to have them soon. There is only one difficulty. The Assembly reports are bulky and expensive and I do not like buying a full set. Will it not be possible for you to consult them in a library or at a friend's? My father I believe has got a full set and you could consult them if you were in Allahabad.

A useful publication which will help you in getting at facts and figures is the *Annual Register*<sup>3</sup> published in Calcutta. I am getting a full set of this for the office.

Do you want me to send you all the books to Amritsar? Will you require the Hunter Committee evidence? I can let you have my personal copy if you require it.

Please do not Pandit me too much. My name by itself is good enough and besides I do not want to feel older than I am!

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp. 375-77. N.M.M.L.

2. The official report on the disturbances and martial law in the Punjab.

3. Edited by H. N. Mitra, the *Indian Annual Register* started publication in the year 1921 from Calcutta. It was an annual chronicle and digest of public affairs in India.

64. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

My dear Panikkar,

16/3/24

Allahabad  
29/5/1924

My dear Panikkar,

I have your letter of the 26th. I do not much like the idea of making a public announcement at this stage about your being entrusted with the task of writing a history of the N.C.O. movement. I would have preferred the announcement to come after a formal resolution of the Working Committee. It is just possible that a premature announcement might not be liked by some people. In any event I should not like to mention Mahatma's name. He is not very keen about it and his name had better be kept out of it for the present. I am writing to the Provincial Congress Committees to send you any information that might help you. A public announcement could come after the Working Committee meeting.

I do not remember the details of the bills I have sent to Kitchlew. He ought to have them in his office. I think I have given him two bills. The main item in both these was intermediate travelling expenses from Allahabad to Amritsar. Please see the bills and if you think either of them rightly appertains to the Sahayak Bureau you can have it transferred.

Please remember to send me a statement of accounts of the Bureau for the next meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp. 385-86. N.M.M.L.

65. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

13/6/24

7/6/24

My dear Panikkar,

Your letter of the 4th June.

I shall be a little surprised if Government take action against the Akali Sahayak Bureau or you. I think it is very unlikely. But there is no knowing, and everything that happens is perhaps for the best *n'est-ce pas?* I hope however to see you in Ahmedabad if not sooner. Why do you not come here to Allahabad just before going to Sabarmati? Allahabad is not exactly on the way as you will have to travel back to Agra from here. If you think it worthwhile and not too much trouble you might come here a day or two earlier and we might then go together. I propose to start on the 23rd June.

You can dispose of the duplicator at less than cost price provided the price is reasonable.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p. 401. N.M.M.L.

66. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>

13/6/24

Dear Sir,

Mr. Panikkar of the Akali Sahayak Bureau informs me that your committee has received Rs. 1,500 from Sikhs outside India for Akali relief. This money might legitimately be spent through the Akali Sahayak Bureau and I trust you will help the Bureau out of this fund. The future of the Bureau will be decided in Ahmedabad at the A.I.C.C. meeting there but meanwhile I hope you will give up to Rs. 500 for necessary expenses to the Bureau.

Kindly send me your account of the monies given to you for Akali relief. How much money has been spent on relief? Also please let me know how much money you have advanced to the Sahayak Bureau.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p. 411. N.M.M.L.

67. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

To K. M. Panikkar 13/6/24

13/6/24

Dear Sir,

I have your telegram. I have written to the Secretary, Punjab P.C.C. about the monies received from outside India for Akali relief and have requested him to spend this money through the Sahayak Bureau. In the meantime I have asked him to give you upto Rs. 500 for necessary expenses.

Kindly remember to send me an account of your receipts and expenditure for submission to the Working Committee.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p. 413. N.M.M.L.

68. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

Please remember the details of the bills I have sent to Kitchlew. He ought to have them in his office. I think I have given him two bills. The J.M.M. went to S. G. S. These was intermediate travelling expenses for the next meeting of the Working Committee.

25/7/1924

My dear Panikkar,

Your letter came quite as a surprise. I thought you had forgotten us and our office. I have been wanting to write to you for some time but I have been very much occupied.

I have asked the Punjab P.C.C. to pay you Rs. 400. I am looking through your accounts and hope to settle them soon.

Have you sent the duplicator? It is badly wanted here.

Is there any truth in the report that you are soon going to take charge of a daily in Delhi?

I hope you remember that you have to visit Gidwani in jail.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p. 437. N.M.M.L.

69. To K. M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>

Under the law of the land of India, I am sending this money on behalf of the Sahayak Bureau. Please pay some from Amritsar that the Sahayak Bureau is best suited to subscription and correspondence etc. The money being sent may be used for the expenses of the Bureau. I hope I understand that you may need to do so.

30/7/1924

My dear Panikkar,

Thanks for Bhagat's<sup>2</sup> receipts.

I have received the printed notice about the advent of *Hindustan*. I wonder if you are too busy to write to me about it. It appears to be settled now that the paper will come out. What is going to happen to the Sahayak Bureau? When do you intend leaving Amritsar? You will appreciate my interest in these questions. I do not personally think it is necessary to continue the Bureau after your departure. Please consult Mohamad Ali. Presumably you will see him soon. Also what happens to the great history?

In case you are closing up the Bureau, please sell off the furniture yourself or make satisfactory arrangements for its sale. Congress furniture has a habit of disappearing.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii)/1924, p. 449. N.M.M.L.

2. G. L. Bhagat assisted Karam Chand Shukla and later K. M. Panikkar at the Akali Sahayak Bureau in 1924.

70. To Madan Mohan Malaviya and Motilal Nehru<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,  
You will remember that the Congress has created a trust<sup>2</sup> for the Jallianwala Bagh and appointed you and a number of other gentlemen

2/8/24

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 3, 1924, pp. 15-17. N.M.M.L.

2. In December 1919 the Congress decided to purchase Jallianwala Bagh for the nation, and appointed a committee, with Pandit Malaviya as president, to organize a trust for its management.

as trustees. I understand that money can be drawn from the fund under the joint signatures of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru. Reports have come from Amritsar that the Bagh requires a great deal of supervision and encroachments are continually being made on it. May I suggest that you may request the Executive Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to exercise this supervision over the management of the Bagh? So far as payments are concerned they might only be made or sanctioned by you on the recommendation of the Punjab Committee. I think this arrangement will certainly improve matters. If you agree with this proposal I shall request you to inform the persons in charge of the Bagh now as well as the Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**71. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab<sup>1</sup>**

25/7/1924  
2/8/24

Dear Sir,

Frequent complaints are made about the management of the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. The trustees of the fund can exercise little or no supervision and the whole burden is cast on the local officers in charge. I have suggested to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru that they might request your Executive Committee to exercise the necessary supervision over the management and in case of expenditure to recommend to them what should be paid. I trust your committee will undertake this work.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 3, 1924, p. 19. N.M.M.L.

## 72. On the Akali Jatha<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru said that they were talkative men whilst the Akalis were practical men. He commented on his conviction at Nabha and said it was due to Mr. Gandhi that he had not joined Professor Gidwani. The arrival of this *Jatha* showed how Indians abroad were thinking of the motherland. In India the Sikhs are in a minority but no one hears of their being attacked by Hindus and Mohamadans; this is due to their organisation and the readiness to defend themselves from unrighteous attacks. The nonco-operation movement had been started to make people courageous. He condemned the Lucknow riots<sup>2</sup> and exhorted the people of Allahabad to remain calm. He deprecated the closing of shops on mere rumour and hartals of one community against the other. In view of Mr. Gandhi's fast all should strive for unity. The Akali affair was an all-India affair and if Swaraj comes it would be a Swaraj of Hindus, Musalmans and Sikhs and all other peoples living in India and not of one nation alone. Unity was the foremost question of the day.

1. Government of U.P. Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. XLII, No. 38 dated 27 September, 1924.

The Akali *Jathas* were squads of Sikhs courting arrest and imprisonment. The Canadian Akali *Jatha* was the group that had come out to India from Canada to participate in the struggle. It came to Allahabad, and on 20 September 1924 a public meeting, presided over by Jawaharlal, was held to welcome it.

2. There had been communal rioting at Lucknow on 12 September 1924.

## ON OPIUM TRAFFIC

### 73. To all the Members of the Working Committee<sup>1</sup>

2 June 1924

Dear Sir,

Mr. C. F. Andrews suggests that the Congress should conduct an enquiry in Assam to get together the facts relating to opium production in order to strengthen India's case against the continuation of the opium evil. The facts are said to be overwhelmingly in favour of this case but owing to the absence of any organized effort to collect them little advantage can be taken of them. The Government of India's representatives on the League of Nations stated on the last occasion that the people of India did not want to limit materially or put an end to opium production, so that Britain is using the fair name of India to continue the opium traffic. There is a great agitation in America this year against this traffic and the question is going to be specially considered by the League of Nations next November. The League has decided to hear individuals and representatives of associations and non-official bodies in addition to the official representatives. A number of Americans interested in this question have suggested that the Congress send representatives direct to this meeting of the League to present India's case. The Rev. J. T. Sunderland<sup>2</sup> has addressed an open letter<sup>3</sup> on the subject to Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Congress Leaders.

Mr. Andrews suggests that immediate steps should be taken in Assam to collect facts relating to repression by Government with regard to

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part-I), 1924, p. 97. N.M.M.L.
2. (1842-1936); an Unitarian minister from the United States, he paid long visits to India and wrote a book *India in Bondage* which was proscribed as seditious by the Government of India.
3. In this letter of 24 April 1924, Sunderland suggested that the Congress send a delegation to the Opium Conference sponsored by the League of Nations and refute the British Government's contention that there was no desire in India to limit the production of opium.

drink and drugs prevention; figures showing effect of popular movement on opium consumption and decline of revenue; facts regarding consumption of opium village by village; facts showing encouragement of opium by Government officials; draft summary of history of opium in Assam in the past and under British rule and as a monopoly; evidence as to actual carrying out of Opium Limitation Act of 1921, and general propaganda against opium. All these facts to be put together in a report to be published by the Congress.

It has been calculated that this enquiry will cost about Rs. 3,000 and it is said that if a grant of Rs. 1,000 is made by the A.I.C.C. for the purpose the local Congress Committee will be able to raise the remaining Rs. 2,000 or more if necessary. A request is therefore made to the A.I.C.C. to grant Rs. 1,000 immediately. The work will be undertaken under the auspices of the Assam P.C.C. and it is said that it will be very useful in reviving interest in Congress activities as well as diverting people's attention from communal troubles.

The President desires me to consult members of the Working Committee as to whether Rs. 1,000 should be granted for the purpose of this work. For the present this is the only question before us. The question of how the facts collected are to be utilised may be considered later. Kindly intimate to me your views as to this grant of Rs. 1,000 as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 74. To Tarak Nath Das<sup>1</sup>

My dear Mr. Das,  
I am obliged to you for your letters and cuttings. I am also thankful for Miss La Motte's<sup>2</sup> *The Ethics of Opium* which you have kindly sent me. I have forwarded Rev. J. Sunderland's open letter to Mr. Gandhi together with your article. I have also sent a copy of your article to my father.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part-I), 1924, pp. 11-12. N.M.M.L.

2. Ellen Newbold La Motte (1873-1961); a nurse in the French army in 1915-16; opposed the opium policy of the Government of India in the mid-twenties and was awarded the Lin Tse-hsu memorial medal for her work against opium traffic in 1930.

The opium question is at last, I am glad to say, attracting some attention in India. There is a proposal, which will be considered at the next meeting of the Congress Executive, to have a thorough enquiry into the question in Assam. An endeavour will be made to collect facts to show how the British Government has consistently encouraged opium traffic and suppressed attempts at drink and drug prevention. I hope this enquiry will take place soon and will gather together useful facts.

The political situation in India is extraordinary and I shall not endeavour to explain it in the course of a letter. I hope it will clear up soon. Meanwhile many of us here are in considerable difficulties and are greatly perplexed.

Bande Mataram,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**75. To C. F. Andrews<sup>1</sup>**

16 August 1924

My dear Mr. Andrews,

I hope you have had an enjoyable voyage and are quite fit.

You will remember urging an opium enquiry in Assam. The last meeting of the A.I.C.C. decided on this and I believe the Assam P.C.C. is carrying on the work. The Working Committee however has specially entrusted the work to you and it was largely relying on you that they decided as they did. I hope therefore that you will supervise the work there and put it on right lines. The writing of the report will also be largely your work. Kindly let me know what you propose to do and when the report is likely to be ready.

The A.I.C.C. also decided on sending a deputation to Ceylon and Malaya<sup>2</sup>, according to your suggestion. As you are just coming from Malaya, you will probably be able to give valuable advice as to what we should do. Did you have time to study the condition of Indian labourers there in any detail?

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part-I), 1924, pp. 139-40. N.M.M.L.

2. To inquire into the condition of Indian labourers.

76. To C. F. Andrews<sup>1</sup>

18 August 1924

My dear Mr. Andrews,

I received your letter of the 27th July from Taiping a few hours after posting my letter to you. I do not know why there was so much delay in your letter reaching me. I think the post office delivered it by mistake to the wrong person.

Thanks for the cuttings from the *Times*. They will form a useful record of the O'Dwyer-Nair trial<sup>2</sup>. I am getting them sorted and pasted for facility of reference. I am very interested to learn that they were given to you by Miss Sherwood. I shall be glad if she comes back to India.

I am writing to Mr. Phookan<sup>3</sup> and the Assam Provincial Congress Committee to keep in readiness for you. In accordance with your suggestion the Working Committee has granted Rs. 1,000 for the Opium Enquiry, provided that the Assam P.C.C. collects another Rs. 2,000. So far I have sent them Rs. 250 for preliminary expenses. As soon as I learn that they have collected Rs. 2,000, I shall have the remaining Rs. 750 sent to them also.

I am very glad you have been able to conduct a full enquiry into the labour conditions in Malaya. Your work will save the Congress the trouble of sending a deputation as had been decided by the A.I.C.C. in June last. I have been corresponding about this proposed deputation with the Servants of India Society.

You will remember that the Congress appointed a committee in Ceylon to enquire into conditions there. Unfortunately they have done no work and are quarrelling with each other. You know them. Could you drop a line to some one there to make up their differences and proceed to work?

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part-I), 1924, pp. 143-44. N.M.M.L.

2. Sir Michael O'Dwyer had sued Sir Sankaran Nair in London for libel in some passages in Nair's book *Gandhi and Anarchy*, where Nair had accused him of forcible recruiting and responsibility for the atrocities in the Punjab. The judge gave a partisan summing up and the jury awarded O'Dwyer £ 500 damages with cost. Professor Harold Laski was one of the few dissenting jurymen.

3. Tarun Ram Phookan (1877-1939); one of the leading Congressmen of Assam. He was also president of the Assam Sahitya Sabha.

77. To A. C. Wilson<sup>1</sup>

At last, I am glad to say, there is a proposal, which will be considered at the next meeting of the Congress Executive, to have a thorough enquiry into the question in Assam. An endeavour will be made to collect facts to show how the British Government has consistently encouraged opium traffic and unsuccess-  
ful attempts at drink and drug control.

9 January 1925

Dear Sir,<sup>2</sup>

At the request of Mr. C. F. Andrews, I have today cabled to you the text of the opium resolution of the Indian National Congress passed at Belgaum towards the end of December. I enclose a copy of the full resolution on the Drink and Opium Traffic. You will notice that I had left out the first paragraph of the resolution in my cable as there appeared to be no urgency in communicating this part of the resolution.

You will be interested to know that it is proposed to publish soon the report of an enquiry into the opium traffic in Assam.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Encl. One

DRINK AND OPIUM TRAFFIC

The Congress notes with satisfaction that notwithstanding the setback suffered by the campaign against the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs initiated in 1921, Congress workers in several parts of the country have continued it with vigour and determination. The Congress hopes that the peaceful endeavour of workers to wean those who are addicted to the drink or the opium habit from the curse, will receive further and greater strength and encouragement than hitherto.

The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habit of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India and would therefore welcome its abolition.

The Congress is further of opinion that the regulation by the Government of India of the opium traffic is detrimental not only to the moral welfare of India but of the whole world, and that the cultivation of opium in India which is out of all proportion to medical and scientific requirements should be restricted to such requirements.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part-I), 1924, p. 51. N.M.M.L.
2. A. C. Wilson (1866-1955); came to India in 1893 as secretary to his father who was a member of the Royal Commission on Opium; was an active member of the India Conciliation Group in the 1930's.

## ON COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

number of eyewitnesses and those who had been injured and also several leaders and leading citizens. On the Mohamadan side we did not see so many people, nor could we have the same kind of witnesses. By the very nature of the incident we could hardly have Mohamadans as witnesses of the actual attack etc. giving evidence before us. The however was explained to us fully by

78. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

leading member of Sambhal and the leading municipality. A number of other Mohamadans in Sambhal and in Moradabad were also seen by us and admitted to us that they had been beaten up but badrussaman is now in Lucknow and fully able to speak for himself. Allahabad  
12-9-1924

Respected Bapuji,

I returned from Sambhal<sup>2</sup> yesterday and am sending you two copies of the report prepared there. I received your letter yesterday. I have also received your telegram and am replying to it separately. It would have been better had Moazzam Ali or Hayat come to Sambhal with me, but I just forgot about them. I had taken Badruzzaman<sup>3</sup> with me. He is related to Khaliquzzaman. He was quite helpful.

Lucknow is in a bad state and every day the tension is increasing. Some talks to secure an agreement are proceeding and I hear that the Amethi<sup>4</sup> Mohamadans are prepared to apologise to the Hindus. But this alone will probably not satisfy the Hindus. Some people have asked me to go and arrange a compromise, but I have no desire to do so and I have refused to go point blank. Whom would I represent? The Hindus are not going to accept me, and why should the Muslims do so?

Yours obediently,  
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 10481. Original in Hindi.
2. Sambhal is a town in Moradabad district. Of its population of nearly 50,000 in 1924, two-thirds were Muslims. In 1924, the annual fair coincided with the Mohurram festival and sparked off communal rioting. Jawaharlal and Shaikh Badruzzaman visited the town to report on the causes and nature of the riots.
3. Shaikh Badruzzaman (b. 1898) of Barabanki district, left the Aligarh University to join the noncooperation movement in 1920.
4. A large village about 20 miles from Lucknow where also communal rioting had occurred.

79. On the Hindu-Muslim Trouble at Sambhal<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

At the request of Mr. C. R. Andrews, I have today

12 September 1924

1. I was at Moradabad and Sambhal for three days—September 8th, 9th and 10th—to enquire into the Hindu-Muslim trouble which had occurred there during the *Mohurrum*. At my request Shaikh Badruzzaman had preceded me from Lucknow by two days and had interviewed a number of people in Moradabad before I arrived. We then went to Sambhal together. This report has not so far been seen by Mr. Badruzzaman as he is in Lucknow and I am writing this in Allahabad. We have however discussed the whole affair and together considered the evidence and have arrived at the same conclusions on the principal points at issue. This report embodies these conclusions.

2. As at Amethi and elsewhere where such incidents have occurred, there is sure to be a big criminal case in the court and both the parties are preparing for this. They are very much afraid to say or do anything which might prejudice this case, and it is extraordinarily difficult to get at the truth under these circumstances. *Prima facie* the Hindus are the aggrieved party. Two of their temples have been desecrated and idols have been broken; a number of them have been badly beaten and still bear the marks of injury. On the other hand no Mohamadan to our knowledge has sustained any marked injury. It is said however that a few were hurt. The burden of proof was therefore on the Mohamadan side and their position was a difficult one. There was some hesitation on their part to give evidence before us. At the very beginning we were told by them in Sambhal that they did not like the idea of committing themselves before us and our publishing reports in the press. We assured them that it was no concern of ours to mention any names and that in any event our report would be meant for Mr. Gandhi and not for publication. They reluctantly agreed to help us in the enquiry but they were far from satisfied.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 10, 1924, pp. 49-74. N.M.M.J.

3. The Hindus approached us more eagerly and we interviewed a number of eye witnesses and those who had been injured and also several *raises* and leading citizens. On the Mohamadan side we did not see so many people, nor could we have the same kind of witnesses. By the very nature of the incident we could hardly have Mohamadan eye witnesses of the actual attack etc. giving evidence before us. The general Mohamadan viewpoint however was explained to us fully by a Mohamadan gentleman, the leading zamindar of Sambhal and the chairman of the local municipality. A number of other Mohamadans in Sambhal and in Moradabad were also seen by us and subjected to searching questions. But their evidence consisted almost entirely of hearsay and conjecture.

4. The general impression of the evidence is that there was a considerable amount of hard lying on both sides. The impression one gathered, as some persons gave their versions and answered our questions, was that of a court room and carefully tutored witnesses repeating a well prepared story. The two accounts differ materially on almost every important point. On the Hindu side there is direct evidence and important circumstantial data. Unfortunately the Muslim side could not be equally well put to us. This was partly due to the inherent difficulty of the position. We would have stayed on if there had been any chance of further reliable evidence coming to us. But this was not likely as our arrival in the town had created a bit of a commotion, and it was difficult for us to get out of the hands of the wire-pullers on both sides. A quiet enquiry conducted by some little known person would perhaps be helpful in elucidating some doubtful points.

5. We have however sufficient data to come to some general conclusions which may be accepted without hesitation. The Hindus, as has been said above, have *prima facie* a good case. They are however trying to improve upon it by supplying all manner of details to show premeditation and careful preparation for attack on the part of Muslims, by exaggerating instances of cruelty and improper behaviour by Muslims, and above all by implicating in the riot almost every Mohamadan of note in Sambhal, as well as the local Muslim officials. The Mohamadans on the other hand try to make out that the Hindus carefully prepared to provoke Muslims by having music and singing on a large scale at the very time when the *Tazias* are taken out, and got ready to attack them and did in fact take the initiative; and that the Hindus themselves broke up their idols and desecrated their temples simply to get the Muslims in trouble. An attempt has also been

made to implicate in the riot, presumably as a counterblast to the similar attempt of the Hindus, one or more prominent Hindus.

6. Briefly what happened, in our opinion, was this. There had been considerable friction between the Hindus and Muslims for some time past and specially during the early days of the *Mohurrum*. The Mohamadans were smarting under the notion that the Hindus were getting uppish and with the help of a partisan sub-divisional officer were interfering with the rights of Muslims. On the night of 9th *Mohurrum* some Hindus were present in their temple and a large number of Mohamadans had gathered together at a little distance for the *Tazia* procession. The Mohamadans came to the temple and objected to any music. They were told that there was no music but they immediately fell on the Hindus and beat them and desecrated that temple as well as a *thakurdwara* at a little distance.

7. Sambhal is a town in the district of Moradabad, about 23 miles from Moradabad. It is a very ancient town, perhaps one of the few most ancient towns in India. Mention is made of it in the *Puranas*. It was an important place in the Hindu period and Prithvi Raj built a fine temple which it is said was subsequently converted into the principal mosque of the city. This still exists. There are other relics of Prithvi Raj also. During early Muslim times, it was an important seat of power and was even the capital once. During the Moghul period, it was the headquarters of a province. It is full of *teerths* and sacred wells. It is said that the next *avatar* will come from Sambhal. The population now is just under 50,000, two thirds of it being Muslim. Thus there are about 32,000 Mohamadans and 16,000 Hindus. The town itself now is really more of a collection of villages with large tracts of agricultural land between different *Mohallas*. Just outside the municipal limits of Sambhal are the *Sola Sarais* which are also thickly populated villages with a large majority of Muslims. The railway goes to Sambhal but nonetheless it is not very easily accessible as it is situated on the branch of a branch line.

8. The principal temple which has been desecrated is called the Surajkund temple. This is also supposed to be a very old temple. It stands in the centre of a grove belonging to the temple. The central building is a *Shivalaya* with one or two images of Ganesh at the side. A side building has a big image of Hanuman. There is a small well and a *pucca* pond which owing to the rains had overflowed. Half the grove was under about two or three feet of water. It is said that many Hindus hid in this water after the Muslim attack. Adjoining the tem-

ple ground is a Muslim graveyard. There have been some disputes about the line of demarcation and a right of way.

There is a *Thakurdwara* (of Lallu Pande) a short distance from this temple. This was also desecrated.

The tahsil headquarters, the *tahsildar's* house, the sub-inspector's house, and the Dak Bungalow where the S.D.O. [Sub-Divisional Officer] was staying are all within a furlong or at most a furlong and a half from the temple.

9. The district of Moradabad is notorious for Hindu-Muslim troubles. There is a large Muslim population in it and both in the city of Moradabad and in some small towns there is frequent friction. Congress work has not prospered there in spite of repeated efforts. There are a large number of weavers and an enormous quantity of cloth hand-woven either wholly or partly of mill yarn. No reliable pure *Khaddar* is made in any quantity. The local Hindus have also taken great interest in the *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* movements.

10. There is a great deal of endowed temple property round about Sambhal. In course of time much of this had been misappropriated by various persons both Hindu and Muslim. Some five or six years ago, a Hindu Sabha was started in Sambhal. This was a local affair and at that time had little to do with any similar all India or provincial organisation. The Sabha started litigation to recover the temple property which in its opinion had been misappropriated. It has succeeded in many cases both against Hindus and Muslims, but chiefly the latter. Litigation is still going on about a right of way, the boundary of a graveyard and other matters. These activities of the Hindu Sabha have considerably irritated the Muslims.

11. Owing to their large majority in the town and neighbourhood, and for other reasons, Muslims have all along been top dogs in Sambhal. They have more members in the municipal board, including their own Chairman, and Hindus complain that nearly all municipal employees are Mohamadans. For a long time past there has been a practice that almost all higher Govt. officials in the town e.g. S.D.O., *Tahsildar* and Police Inspectors, are Muslims. This year an innovation was made and a Hindu S.D.O. was sent. This displeased the Mohamadans greatly.

12. The *chamars* and other similar castes are not allowed to use most of the wells in the town. They have a few special wells in their own *mohallas*. Some months ago, the local Arya Samaj had their annual conference, and on a representation from the *chamars*, who had con-

tributed money to the *Samaj*, it was decided to help them to break down this custom which prevented them from using many wells in the town. Later the *chamars*, supported by some others, drew water from two of these wells. This was resented both by the Muslims and the higher caste Hindus. As this incident happened during the *Ramzan* Muslims were all the more annoyed and some felt that it was specially meant for them. On applications being made to the local officials an order under Sec. 144 was promulgated whereby *chamars* and such like were forbidden to draw water from such wells. Since then the *chamars* have kept away and there has been no trouble on this score.

13. There is an annual *mela* in one of the distant and self-contained *mohallas* of Sambhal — Sarai Tarin. This is called *Chharion ka mela* and it comprises a procession of poles and flags representing some saint or *pir*. It is something like *Ghazi Mian's mela*<sup>2</sup> in other towns. Last year it fell during the *Mohurrum*. An agreement was arrived at by some Hindus & Muslims, with the help of the local officials, not to have the *mela* during the *Mohurrum*. This compromise was acted upon and no *mela* was held. It was stated by the Hindus however that the compromise was an enforced one and the Hindus were more or less compelled to agree to it by the S.D.O. and *Tahsildar*, both of whom were Muslims. This abandonment grieved the Hindus, specially as the District Magistrate had given out previously that full liberty would be allowed to each party to have their processions etc. The Hindus held a mass meeting of protest and condemned the compromise and the action of the local S.D.O. in bringing it about. The District Magistrate is also said to have expressed his displeasure at the abandonment of the *mela* and to have reprimanded the officials. All this happened last year.

14. This year also the *mela* conflicted with the *Mohurrum* and the Mohamadans wanted the precedent of last year to be followed. A little before the *Mohurrum* the Muslim S.D.O. of Sambhal was transferred and a Hindu S.D.O. took his place. On the 1st of August (*Mohurrum* beginning on the 3rd August), the District Magistrate of Moradabad promulgated a long order under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. which *inter alia* provided for the holding of the *Chharion ka mela* and stated that there should be no music or singing when the mourning processions were taken out. No times were specified either in this order

2. *Ghazi Mian* was the most popular of the *Panch Pir* (five saints) worshipped by Muslims and Hindus alike.

or subsequently as to when these processions were to come out and the music and singing was not to take place. It was understood however that there could be music in the temple at the ordinary times of worship but certainly not at night after 9 p.m. This order, specially the part relating to the *Chharion ka mela*, greatly displeased the Mohamadans and they boycotted the *mela* which was held on the 5th *Mohurrum* (7th August). As a protest the Muslims of Sarai Tarin, the *mohalla* where the *mela* is held, did not have any *Muhurrum* celebration.

15. The various matters referred to above upset the composure of the Muslims and they feared that with the help of the officials the Hindus would encroach upon their rights. It is the Hindu case that the Muslims thereupon decided to revenge themselves on the Hindus and specially to get the new Hindu S.D.O. in trouble. The Hindus further say that the big Muslim zamindars and even the Muslim *tahsildar* were parties to this decision and word was sent to the Muslims in the neighbouring villages to gather in large numbers on the night of the 9th *Mohurrum* in Sambhal. We have no evidence worth the name about these allegations of the Hindus and the mention of the big zamindars' and the *tahsildar*'s names in this connection appears to be largely prompted with the desire to get them into trouble. It is however clear and admitted that the Muslims were in an angry and resentful mood and felt that the authorities were being partial to the Hindus. The appointment of the Hindu S.D.O. and the promulgation of the order under Sec. 144 at a very late stage, on the eve of *Mohurrum*, when it was not possible to object effectively against any provision in it relating to the *mela* etc., were sufficient evidence for them to prove the partisanship of the higher authorities.

16. On the 7th *Mohurrum* (9th August) the *Mehndi* procession (a part of the *Mohurrum* celebrations) took place on a large scale as usual. It is said that a Hindu *pujari* took exception to the presence of an extra drum in the procession but nothing untoward happened. Some Hindus as usual took part in the procession.

I might mention here that Sambhal is famous for its *Mohurrum* drums. Some of these are enormous — they have a diameter of over six feet.

17. The 9th *Mohurrum* (11th August) was also the last Monday in *Sawan*. In the middle of the day a Muslim constable is said to have informed the police sub-inspector that it appeared that there would be a music party at the Surajkund temple. The sub-inspector informed the S.D.O. who was in the Dak Bungalow. The S.D.O. told him to send for the *pujari* of the temple and to read out the section 144 order

to him and make it clear that there must be no music after 9 p.m. This was done and the *pujari* was warned.

18. It is stated with unanimity by Hindus that all drum beating (excepting one drum) was stopped by the Muslims in the evening at about 6 p.m., and was not renewed that evening or night. This is denied with equal unanimity by the Muslims. The point is not very material except as an important indication that Muslims were agitated and were preparing for trouble. Hindus lay stress on it merely to prove this. It is probable that out of the 100 or more drums in the town many were not being used that evening. Of course all drums stopped as soon as news of the night attack spread. I am unable to say however on the evidence before us that all drums, excepting one, stopped definitely at 6 p.m., or thereabouts.

19. There was the usual *puja* in the Surajkund temple at the hours of worship, accompanied by *shankh*, bells etc. The evening *arti* took place about 7 or 7.30 p.m. and thus there was *shankh* blowing etc. then also. This was in accordance with the Sec. 144 order, and it was not objected to. The Hindu and Muslim versions of subsequent happenings are very different :

*Muslim version*

The Hindus were specially preparing to have music on a large scale this night in order to annoy and insult the Muslims during their *Tazia* procession. This is shown by the fact that the constable mentioned the matter to the sub-inspector and the S.D.O. had to send for the *pujari*. A large number of Hindus — about 200-300 — collected in the Surajkund temple at 9 p.m. and there was music which is variously described as harmonium playing, *sitar* etc. A short distance from the temple grounds Muslims were congregating for their *Tazia* procession. They heard the temple music with annoyance and anger. Some of them went towards the

*Hindu version*

The day being the last Monday in *Sawan* there was a stream of people coming to the temple, performing their *pooja*, and returning. Many had fasted that day. The usual *arti* took place in the evening. After that some persons continued to come but few remained. At about 9 p.m. there were 25 to 30 men sitting on a *chabutra* adjoining the temple. These men were of the poorer classes, petty tradesmen, a few *sadhus*, and some *ganja* smokers. They were busy with their beads in silent *bhajans* or in distributing or eating *prasad*. Newcomers went to the temple and performing their worship rung the bell once or twice. Apart from

temple and, addressing the Hindus there from the garden gate, protested against the music. There were high words between the parties and the Hindus came out to the gate and attacked the Muslims. There was then a general fight for about ten minutes or so. It was ended by the arrival of the authorities when both parties retired. During the fight both Hindus and Muslims were hurt. Most of the Mohamadans present at the fight were probably outside villagers who had come to Sambhal as usual to celebrate the night of the 9th Mohurrum. These outsiders who were hurt went off to their villages and this explains why no Mohammadan wounded was found. A few Mohamadans pointed some days after the event to marks on their arms and hands as evidence of injuries received.

It is stated that the fight took place near the gate. The Mohamadans thus had no occasion to go near the temple, and they did not desecrate it. This desecration and breaking of idols must have been done by Hindus themselves partly immediately after the fight and partly late at night when everything was over, in order to get the Mohamadans in trouble.

There was no music of any kind, not even conch blowing. Indeed there is no custom of having any music in the *Shivalaya* at that hour of the night. The peaceful character of the people assembled is pointed out, also the fact that most of them were middle aged. No one expected any trouble else they would have prepared for it by having more men or younger and better fighters.

Just then cries of Ali & Hussain and *Allah-o-Akbar* were heard gradually approaching. It was also noticed that large number of Muslims were wandering about all round the temple. Some Hindus fearing an attack tried to escape but, excepting one or two, they failed as all outlets were blocked by Mohamadans. Some Mohamadans then entered the temple grounds, with the crowd following them closely. They came to the *chabutra* and said something about objecting to music. Some Hindus replied that there was no music. Thereupon the Muslim mob fell on the Hindus and started beating them mercilessly with the big *dankas* (the sticks with which the drums were beaten). The Hindus present did not try to fight. They were wholly unprepared and were unfit for it. They tried to run away. A few succeeded in climbing up some trees; others hid in the water which covered part of the temple grounds. The Mohamadans after beating one man carried him and threw him into the temple well. They then started hunting for the Hindus who

had hidden themselves and pulled them down from the trees and out of the water and beat them again. One *sadhu* had been collecting money for a temple and had Rs.1,305 on him. He was stripped naked and the money was taken away. The temple was attacked and desecrated. The principal stone being firmly fixed could not be removed or broken, but it was subjected to *lathi* blows and chips came off it. A side image of Ganesh was broken. An image of Hanuman in a side temple was also hit with *lathis* but little harm was done to it.

It is also said that the Muslim *tahsildar* and prominent Muslim zamindars came when rioting was in progress and incited the rioters.

Some rioters went off to the neighbouring *thakurdwara* and desecrated it and broke its images. The *pujari* there on seeing the mob approaching had gone up a tree and there he remained for a long time till the coast was clear.

All this beating and rioting began at about 9 p.m. and lasted for at least an hour and at most two hours. It was finally ended by the arrival of the Hindu S.D.O. with a police guard. The S.D.O. had the man in the well pulled out and he sent 17 Hindus who were lying wounded to the hospital. No Mohamadan wounded was found.

The S.D.O. then patrolled the city to prevent looting etc. There was in fact no looting or rioting other than what took place in the temple and neighbourhood.

The Hindus identify most of the leading Muslims of the town as having been amongst the rioters. They point out that the *tahsildar* and sub-inspector (both Muslims) live quite near the scene of occurrence and yet there was great delay in coming to the spot, although the *tahsildar* was informed immediately. Indeed no special information was necessary as the noise could be heard all over the town.

20. Before I deal with the above versions I wish to state one or two subsequent facts. Immediately after the event, the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police went to Sambhal and a police enquiry began. The Hindus, as stated above, implicated all the leading Muslims. For a while there was no response on the part of the Muslims. On the 8th or 9th day after the event 9 Mohamadans put in statements confessing that they were present during the fight and took part in it. Part of the facts given in these confessions have been given above in the Muslim version. The names of one or two prominent Hindu zamindars were also mentioned in these statements as having been present in the fight. Some of these 9 Mohamadans claimed to have been hurt in the fight and pointed to some slight marks on the arms etc.

21. An attempt was made by the Magistrate some days later to bring about a compromise. He even formed a conciliation board of Hindus and Muslims, but all attempts have failed as the Mohamadans want to compromise only on condition that there is no case started against them, and the Hindus will on no account agree to this.

22. The Hindu version I have given above is based on some solid facts and is partly substantiated by direct evidence. There are however many exaggerations in it. I think it is absurd to think that the *tahsildar* or the leading Mohamadan zamindars actually participated in the fight. They would not dare to do so even though they might sympathise with the attackers. If, as is alleged, they had organised the whole affair, this is all the more reason why they should keep in the background. Besides it must have been extraordinarily difficult to recognize any person in the heat of conflict by moon light. Equally absurd is the allegation of some Muslims that one or two leading Hindu zamindars took part in the fight.

23. The Muslim version is based largely on conjecture. It is on the face of it improbable. The first thing they suggest is that the Hindus prepared carefully from beforehand to attack the Muslims. This is inherently improbable. Hindus would hardly do this in a town like Sambhal with a large Muslim majority. Even if they thought of doing so they would certainly not dream of fixing the night of the 9th of *MohurruM* for it, when large numbers of Mohamadans from the surrounding villages gather in Sambhal. Then again the organisers must be very foolish and very inefficient to gather together a number of weaklings who in the result get a sound thrashing. I think it is clear that the Hindus did not prepare to attack nor did they expect an attack. The initiative in this respect was taken by the Mohamadans.

24. I have already stated that on the evidence in our possession we are unable to say that there was any premeditation on the part of the Muslims. But one thing is clear that they were resentful and angry and it may be that they were very ready to accept any real or fancied challenge to them. Some of them might have been under the impression that there would be another insult to them by the playing of music etc. that night, and they might have decided not to brook this but to take revenge. Apart from this idea there is no sufficient evidence to show premeditation.

25. Vague and varying statements are made by the Muslims on the question of music in the temple. Some say a harmonium was played, others a *sitar*, others a *shankh* and cymbals. Almost all evidence that we got on the subject was hearsay. I think there is little doubt that there was no harmonium or *sitar* or like instrument. I do not think there was any effort on the part of the Hindus to have any music. There was of course the occasional ringing of the bell and this might have misled the Muslim crowd. There is also a possibility of a *shankh* having been blown although there is no particular evidence that it was blown. Apart from this there could not have been any music. Even this noise of the bell or a *shankh* would be quite enough to upset an excited mob. It is quite possible that a wrong statement of a man to the effect that music was being played would immediately be accepted by the crowd without further enquiry. I think it is clear that there was no intention on the part of the Hindus to have music on any large scale at night and in fact they had no such music with the exceptions mentioned. There is also a slight possibility that the *bhajan* of some person present might have been sung so as to be heard by another and reported to the crowd as singing.

26. The Muslims, angry and in a mood for revenge, got excited by the noise of the bell or the *shankh* or even by false information and attacked the temple. There was evidently a short parley and then began the attack. The Hindus were very greatly outnumbered. There is no ground for imagining that there were 200 to 300 Hindus in the temple, as stated on hearsay by some Muslims. On the other hand the figure 25-30 may be an under-estimate. Probably the temple attracted a larger number of people that day, as it was the last Monday in *Sawan*, but they came and went. It is possible that 50 to 75 Hindus were present in the temple when the attack began. Some of these must have fled away right at the commencement. The Hindus apparently showed no fight. They tried to run away or hide themselves on the trees or in the water. The Hindu version tries to make out that a very long time elapsed before official help came and that this was spent in organised hunts with the aid of lanterns for Hindus in hiding. I think this is greatly exaggerated. During an affair of this kind one is apt to gain a very wrong idea of time. It is also possible that the tendency is on the part of the Hindus to prolong the period to show how lax and guilty the *tahsildar* was. Probably the attack lasted twenty minutes or at most half an hour. During this period some men in hiding on the trees or in the water might have been discovered and beaten. A very large number of Mohamadans — several thousands — were wandering along the streets and Hindus in hiding would not receive very gentle treatment. One man was undoubtedly found in the well when the S.D.O. came. Whether he was lifted up and thrown in or was driven into it in the fight it is difficult to say. He himself insists that he was beaten and lifted up and thrown in the well, where fortunately he could cling on to some protruding bricks. Similarly a *sadhu* vehemently told us that he had been robbed of Rs. 1,305 which he had collected for a temple. He had printed appeals which stated that he had already received considerable sums from persons named.

27. The suggestion in the Muslim version that the Hindus themselves must have desecrated their temples and broken their images is pure fancy and not possible to accept without the strongest proofs. On our pointing out the inherent improbability of this, we were told that Aryas did not believe in idol worship and they must have done this in order to accuse the Mohamadans of it afterwards. The whole suggestion is absurd. Even if an individual Hindu or Arya was capable of this, he dare not do it before other Hindus. The suggestion that the desecration or breaking was done late at night long after the riot is also unacceptable. No Hindu dared come out by himself during that night. They all locked and bolted their doors and waited anxiously for the morning.

The general appearance of that temple and *thakurdwara* also did not warrant this secret desecration. There were distinct blows on the stones and chips were off. Besides there is direct evidence of the Hindus who were wounded.

28. The subsequent statement of the 9 Muslims confessing their part in the riot is clearly meant to shield the bigger men whose names had been taken by the Hindus. It is evidently a put up affair. Some of these nine have however also been named by the Hindus as having been present during the attack.

29. Stress is laid on the part of the Hindus on the great delay in the arrival of the *tahsildar* and the sub-inspector, both of whom lived quite near. The Hindus do not say anything against the Hindu S.D.O. who was staying not much further off. I think that the officials might have been smarter and swifter but there was no such delay as is suggested. The *tahsildar* might have and perhaps should have gone immediately to the scene of riot. He did not do so but preferred to go to his superior the S.D.O. He found the S.D.O. asleep! Both of them then came towards the temple. They had no police guard with them and hence they proceeded rather cautiously. They met large groups of Mohamadans in the streets. One of these groups was called upon by the S.D.O. to disperse but they replied, "How can we disperse when our brothers are being beaten by the Hindus in the Surajkund temple"? Just then a squad of police arrived and a threat of fire induced the crowds to disperse. The S.D.O. then went straight to the temple and found that most persons had run away. The remaining persons fled on news of his approach. He found about 17 Hindus wounded lying and no Mohamadan. He had the man from the well taken out and the wounded sent to the hospital. One of the men is still in hospital.

30. It does not appear that there was any instigation for this attack or desecration of temple from outside. No such suggestion was made to us by any person — Hindu or Muslim. Outsiders have of course been frequent visitors in Moradabad and have increased communal feelings, but there appears to be no other connection between the Sambhal riot and the outside world. The local people are fully capable of doing it without any help or suggestion.

Jawaharlal Nehru

80. Mahatma Gandhi's Fast<sup>1</sup>

Sir,— I enclose for favour of publication a notice that is being circulated in Allahabad. I would beg friends in other towns and villages to circulate similar notices and to take steps immediately to put an end to the false rumours which encourage disunity and hatred and often result in strife. Leaders of all communities are meeting at Delhi on the 23rd and, God willing, will find a way out of the impasse. But time passes and daily the danger increases. Each town and village should immediately have its conference of the leaders of all communities and parties and consider and solve its own difficulties.

Jawaharlal Nehru

## THE NOTICE

Mahatma Gandhi has resolved to fast for 21 days as a penance for Hindu and Muslim quarrels.<sup>2</sup> He has issued the following statement:

The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is great distress, which one cannot remove, we must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing, evidently, that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, the 8th of October. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer. As penance I need not have taken the public into confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts — M. K. Gandhi.

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 22 September 1924.

2. There were outbreaks of communal rioting in 1924 in Delhi, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Gulbarga, Allahabad, Calcutta and, worst of all, in Kohat. Mahatma Gandhi, although still convalescing after his operation, decided to go on a fast for 21 days as a protest.

We have little to add to Mahatmaji's words. We would only beg the Hindus and Muslims of Allahabad to ponder over what Mahatmaji has said and to consider what the consequences of his action may be. Today we eat and sleep and quarrel, and he fasts and weeps and prays and lies sleepless, laden with sorrow at the disgrace and disunity that have descended as a curse on this land of ours. We have paid little heed to his words. Now we hold his life in our hands. By our conduct we shall determine our worthiness of the great and noble soul who came to lead our country out of bondage and misery. He fasts and fasts and the days go by and life hangs by a slender thread. Weak and ailing, after a severe illness, and with the burden of a nation's sorrow, he has taken this great resolve. How long can he survive? How long endure the madness of his countrymen to whom he has dedicated a life of service? It is for us, Hindus and Mohamadans, to think and answer these questions and take action, while there is time. The days and the hours pass by and the thread of life becomes slenderer. Let us hasten, and not fail our country and Mahatma Gandhi in this hour of trial.

Purushottam Das Tandon  
Manzar Ali Sokhta<sup>3</sup>  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1884-1958); a leading Congressman of Allahabad; was imprisoned several times during the nationalist movement; member, Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee, 1931.

### 81. Draft Note on Delhi Conference<sup>1</sup>

Recent events in India have made it painfully clear that intolerance of another's belief and religious observances is widely prevalent, and often leads to conflict between persons professing different faiths. In spite of efforts to the contrary this intolerance is increasing and is poisoning the foundations of all national and civic life. It is felt by each community that the leaders of the other communities are partisan and irrational and blindly support their co-religionists in all their deeds and

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia. The note is in Jawaharlal's handwriting and was presumably written sometime in September 1924.

The Unity Conference was held in Delhi from 26 September to 2 October 1924, to discuss ways and means of promoting communal harmony.

misdeeds. Passion and prejudice are displacing sanity and reason, and every kind of progress is becoming most difficult. There can be no effective peace in India till the spirit of intolerance is exorcised. Unity will only come after toleration is understood and practised. It is necessary therefore that the essentials of toleration be proclaimed in clear and definite language and should be brought home to the people of the country.

There must be perfect toleration of other faiths and beliefs and religious practices, and every man or woman must have full liberty to hold and practise and give expression to his faith. There must be no persecution for the holding of any opinions on matters of religion.

The very first essential of toleration is the protection of all places of worship to whatsoever religion they may belong. No provocation of any kind whatever can be deemed to be sufficient to excuse a desecration or attack, and all such desecrations must be condemned.

Conflicts frequently arise between persons of different faiths on the most trivial and non-essential matters. In times of tension and anger acts are done which are meant to annoy or wound the religious susceptibilities of another. These provocations are highly undesirable and should be discouraged. They will automatically cease with the return of normal times. But it must be borne in mind that any amount of provocation accompanying an act, otherwise justified and permitted by the principle of toleration, does not entitle a person to retaliate or interfere with the due performance of that act. There can be no interference in such cases and it must be left to the good sense of the individual or group concerned not to wound unnecessarily the feelings of sister communities. Cow sacrifice has been a fruitful source of conflict. Toleration means that no Hindu must interfere with this however provocative it may be. He may only request and leave the decision to the other. A very recent but an almost equally fruitful source of trouble has been the playing of music in Hindu temples and when passing mosques. The blowing of the *Shankh* has been specially objected to. Toleration again signifies that a Hindu may blow his *Shankh* where he pleases and may play his music even when passing mosques and no Mohamadan must interfere. Only a request can be made.

Every individual has a right to follow his own faith and to change it whenever he so wills. He has further the right to convert or re-convert, by arguments and persuasion, another, provided that on no account must force or unfair means be used. In the case of minor boys and girls under 16, to avoid the possibility of unfair pressure, no attempt should be made to convert them and they should be handed over to people of their own community. Mass conversions are also, in the present state of the country, extremely inexpedient.

82. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
19-10-24

My dear Bapuji,

I must apologise for the delay in writing to you. I have hastily scribbled some impressions and enclose them. I have not had time to re-read them or to complete them.

I have had a telegram from Nagpur<sup>2</sup> asking me to go over there but I feel I must not leave Allahabad. Besides I have fever today and father will not let me go for some little time.

Yours  
Jawaharlal

*Confidential*

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE DISTURBANCES AT ALLAHABAD

I have delayed writing a report on the Allahabad disturbances as I have so far been unable to form a clear idea of the occurrences as a whole. A large number of incidents happened almost simultaneously in various parts of the city and it is by no means easy to arrange them in proper order or to understand their sequence. I have also had to give a great deal of my time to activities, other than conducting an enquiry, connected with the recent troubles. My close connection with Allahabad has been more of a hindrance to me than a help and I have had to move warily in order to prevent harm resulting from some of my activities. To mention an instance, I arrived in Allahabad on the 10th afternoon and went immediately from the station to the city where I wandered about till 6.30 p.m., the curfew hour. I saw a number of

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 10488.
2. Following the outbreak of communal rioting in Nagpur and Kamptee, the local leaders sent telegrams to Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, including Jawaharlal, to visit the area and settle the differences.

shopkeepers and they suggested that we should take some steps to have the big shops opened from the next morning. I welcomed the proposal and arranged a meeting of the Hindu shopkeepers for the next morning. I was told that the shopkeepers did not want to open their shops in obedience to the directions of the authorities but a hint from us might be acted upon. The proposed meeting of shopkeepers however fell through and hardly anyone turned up. I found that the idea that my advent should be followed by a quick opening of shops was not liked by some people and they succeeded in influencing the shopkeepers. As a result of this and one or two other causes the main shops did not open till the 13th. It is possible that if I had remained away in Delhi for another day or two the shops might have opened earlier.

The idea of our carrying an enquiry also somehow jarred on the nerves of many—both Hindus and Muslims—perhaps as each party thought that we would take up an attitude antagonistic to it. Dr. Syed Mahmud kindly broke his journey here on his way back from Delhi and spent 4 or 5 days in Allahabad. He is in perhaps a better position than I am to form definite conclusions about some aspects of the troubles. But even he was handicapped. There is a proposal now that a joint and detailed enquiry should take place on behalf of both communities. This proposal has made it difficult for us to prejudge the issues. As a matter of fact I have had to change my own conclusions in regard to many incidents several times as fresh information came in, and I am not prepared to say that I will not again change them in the light of fresh facts. These impressions should therefore be treated as impressions only liable to change even in material particulars. Dr. Mahmud has now gone to Nagpur but I understand that he will also put down his impressions of the occurrences here. In view of these facts it will perhaps be desirable to keep these reports confidential for the present at least.

Both the communities are wholly and honestly convinced that the other is almost entirely in the wrong. Each accuses the other of pre-meditation and careful preparation, and each points to the almost simultaneous outbreaks in various parts of the city on the evening of the 7th in proof of their contention that the other organised them. There is an extraordinary ignorance of the other's viewpoint and losses, and hence both at present court an enquiry.

The troubles started on the night of the 7th October (*the Dusehra day*) and continued on the 8th & 9th. From the 10th onwards, there has been no disturbance of the peace, except an incident relating to a temple in Katghar (a *mohalla* of Allahabad) which took place on the early morning of the 10th.

The contributory causes here have been the same as elsewhere—*Sangathan* and *Aligol*, separate *akhoras*—and the deliberate preaching of distrust and fear. The local Hindu Sabha consists of a number of very narrow-minded persons with little ability or power even to organise the Hindus but able enough to increase the dislike of the Musalmans. Muslims are very poor in their leaders. There are hardly any with whom one can discuss such matters on an intellectual level. Their most prominent leader is Mr. Vilayat Husain<sup>3</sup>. Hindus are very bitter against him and imagine that he is at the back of everything. As a matter of fact I doubt his capacity to do much. He is a timid person often used as a tool by unscrupulous persons, but I do not think he is bad at heart. I have been favourably impressed by him during the last few days.

Soon after the *Janma Ashtami* there is a *Datkanda* procession. This used to be an insignificant affair but latterly it has assumed some importance. The Mohamadans say that this year it was celebrated on a large scale and many *lathis* were exhibited. This is possible, but nonetheless it did not create any excitement in the city. I was in Allahabad at the time and I did not even know of the procession and heard of it for the first time a fortnight or more after it had taken place.

The *Chehlum* was to follow this and there were rumours of trouble. Admittedly large numbers of Mohamadans were sent for from the adjoining villages to swell the procession and display *lathis*, swords, etc., because it was said that the Hindus had done something similar on the occasion of the *Datkanda*. Just a few days before the *Chehlum* a few Hindus and Muslims met and decided to issue a joint appeal and also arranged that Hindus should accompany the *Chehlum* procession and Muslims the Ram Lila procession. This had a quietening effect and the Hindu Sabha eventually agreed to it. Quite a large number of prominent Hindus including the president and members of the Hindu Sabha took part in the *Chehlum* procession and everything passed off successfully—the procession ending with speeches and mutual congratulations. The procession itself was a long one with a great crowd of *lathiwalas* and a fair sprinkling of swords, spears, daggers etc. Almost every Mohamadan thought it his duty to bring some weapon and it was ludicrous to see the very old and the very young strutting about with rusty weapons and even in some case with open penknives! And the little boys with their penknives were patted on their back for their zeal and enthusiasm! However everything passed off successfully and it was hoped that the *Dusehra* would also end peacefully. The next day—22nd September—I went off to Delhi. It appears however that

3. A leading Congressman of Allahabad.

the tension again increased and everyone looked forward to some trouble. There was no question of any conflict between the Ram Lila processions and Muslim processions. Nonetheless there was this general apprehension. The Muslims accused the Hindus of inviting large numbers of *lathiwalas* from the villages and the Hindus repeated the same charge against the Muslims. Ordinarily great crowds come from the rural areas to see the Ram Lila. In times of tension, every big banker or *raiser* engages some of these professional fighters to defend his house. In the result a considerable number of such persons must have been in Allahabad. I do not think the Hindu Sabha as such invited such people. But the Hindu Sabha might have expected that the lower classes—*chamars*, *pasis* etc. would be useful in a conflict with the Muslims. These classes, for the last few years, have been asked to take part in the Ram Lila processions.

It is highly probable that Muslims also made special arrangements to get their *budmashes* and *lathiwalas* in. But I hardly think it likely that they would choose the *Dusehra* day when, in point of numbers, the Hindus are strongest, to take the aggressive on any large scale. But they did prepare themselves for a conflict if such occurred. On the morning of the 7th—the *Dusehra* day—a rumour was circulated that the Muslims had issued invitations to the surrounding villages for a *Kabaddi* party on a large scale. This game was to take place on the outskirts of the town and on the route of the procession. The time also was the evening when the procession was to pass that way. The choice of the time and place is certainly significant. There could not have been a worse choice. Information of this was immediately sent to the police station and apprehensions of coming trouble increased.

There are two Ram Lila processions, one following the other. The first one passed without any special incident, except that it is said that when they passed the Muslims gathered together for *Kabaddi* or any other purpose, to the extent of 500 men with *lathis*, the Muslim attitude appeared to be threatening. The second procession reached this place just at 6 p.m.—the time for prayers. The *Kotwal* was with it, so also Purushottam Das Tandon and others. As the *azan* was heard at the request of the *Kotwal*, who is a Muslim, the procession was stopped for a few minutes, and music stopped also. After about 5 minutes the *Kotwal* apparently made a sign although the prayers were not quite over. The music started. Thereupon there was a commotion amongst the 500 or so Muslims gathered together across the road (not on the mosque side) and one man hit with his *lathi* a drum. Some stones were also thrown from the mosque. No one was however hurt and the *Kotwal* immediately scolded the Muslims. It is also said that some Muslims themselves gave a slight beating to the man

who had thrown stones from the mosque. The procession started without any further mishap—went to the river and returned. It is said, probably with truth, that the news of this *contretemps* reached various parts of the city in various shapes and forms and was the spark which started the blaze. *Chal gai* was repeated by everybody, and the long expected conflict began in earnest in several places.

The Hindus say that Muslims started it everywhere. The Muslims deny the charge and accuse the Hindus. I am not at all clear about the events of the 7th night. There was fighting in the heart of the city, not far from the *Kotwali* and murders were committed soon after 7.30 p.m. The *Kunjras* (Muslim vegetable sellers) are said to have attacked Hindus inside the vegetable market as well as outside. They wounded some Congress workers, including a clerk in the P.C.C. office. But this clerk gallantly remained with them, and reasoned with them and actually succeeded in calming them a little. They are said to have apologized to him when they discovered that he was a Congress worker. At least one Hindu was killed that night, and many wounded.

About the same time a Hindu band dashed down the main street of the city, killing a harmless Mohainadan, cutting off the hand of another and wounding others.

At night a great effort was made to have the usual illuminations as this, it was believed, would have a calming effect. There was considerable stone throwing from houses—chiefly occupied by prostitutes—at Ramchandra & Laxman.

During 8th and 9th, assaults, free fights, stone throwing etc. continued, groups of both Hindus and Muslims taking the offensive by turns. Deaths also occurred, usually of innocent passers-by. The two or three main incidents were :

1. The looting by a Muslim crowd of a village (Mirapur) on the outskirts of Allahabad. One Hindu was killed here.
2. The attack by some Muslims on Gangagunj—a Hindu *mohalla* facing Muslim *mohalla*. A temple was desecrated here.
3. A fight in Shahgunj also accompanied by a desecration of a temple.
4. A Hindu *bania* shooting at a Mohamadan crowd and killing 2 men and a woman.
5. General and very shameful assaults on individuals and on groups both by Hindus and Muslims.

I shall write more in details about these incidents tomorrow as the time for catching the mail is nearing. I may add however that apart from the mosque incident, I am inclined to think that Hindus took the

initiative on the night of the 7th, and (apart from Gangagunj and Mirapur) the Hindu middle class attitude was deplorable. Several very unfortunate incidents happened in Hindu *mohallas* where well-to-do people live.

Jawaharlal Nehru

### 83. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
20-10-24

My dear Bapuji,

I enclose the second instalment of my impressions. They are very hasty and sketchy and I hope you will excuse their many imperfections. I am sending you my only copy. Could you kindly show it to Mohammad Ali?

Father is going to Nagpur.<sup>2</sup> He is the most suitable person. I would have been hopeless so far as Dr Moonje<sup>3</sup> and his party are concerned.

I have still some fever but I hope to be well soon.

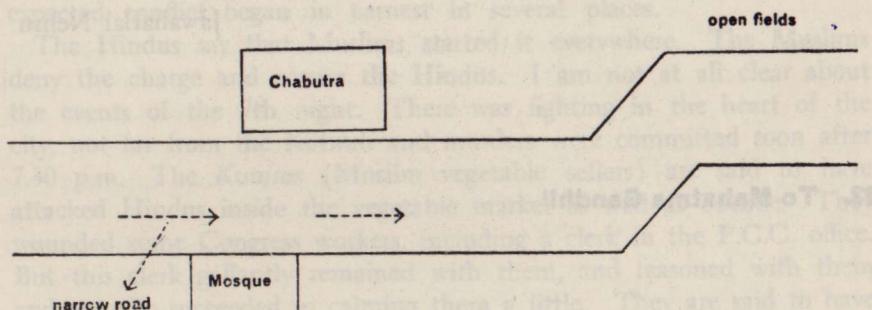
Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

### IMPRESSION OF THE DISTURBANCES AT ALLAHABAD

I wrote yesterday about the incident at a small wayside mosque where the Ram Lila procession stopped for a few minutes and there was a little stone throwing. This mosque is situated on the outskirts of the city and the main procession — so far as the crowds are concerned — gradually gets lesser and lesser before the mosque is reached

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 10488.
2. Following the Hindu—Muslim riots, Motilal Nehru and Maulana Azad visited Nagpur on 26 and 27 October and were successful in bringing about an agreement.
3. B. S. Moonje (1872-1948); a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha.

and soon after it practically ends. The following plan may help to explain the position :



There were only a few persons in the mosque at the time of prayers — perhaps half a dozen. On the *Chabutra* opposite there are said to have been about 500 Musalmans. Many of them are armed with *lathis* etc. There are some detached Muslim *mohallas* in the neighbourhood.

The procession went on after this incident to the river Jamuna where the usual ceremonies were performed including some fireworks. People then returned in twos and threes. It is said that there was some stone throwing on the passers-by in the Muslim *mohalla*.

Before this however trouble had occurred in the heart of the city and elsewhere. Probably the cause of this trouble was an exaggerated account of the mosque incident and a belief that fighting had begun between Hindus and Muslims.

The vegetable market is situated in the busiest quarter of the city. The *Kunjras* (vegetable sellers) are Musalmans and are supposed to be a rough lot. It is said that they took the initiative and started attacking and beating all Hindus they came across. I am unable to say who began the attack but I doubt if the *Kunjras* are solely to blame. There can be no doubt that in one case at least on the night of the 7th a Hindu band rushed through the principal streets, killing one Mohamadan and wounding several. There was also a stone-throwing and bottle-throwing contest between Hindus and Muslims near the *subzimandi*. The fighting of the 7th resulted in the death and wounding of both Hindus and Muslims.

On the 8th and 9th there were many fights, some developing into pitched battles. They usually resulted in some injuries caused by stone throwing. In some places Hindus were on the aggressive, in others the Muslims. There were also attacks by groups or individuals of the other

community. These usually ended in serious injury or even death. Early on the 8th morning, a Muslim passer-by was seriously injured very near Bharti Bhawan, not far from Pandit M. M. Malaviya's house. The news of this attack spread in the Muslim *mohallas* in exaggerated forms and there was a general belief amongst the more ignorant Muslims that a slaughter of Muslims had taken place near Bharti Bhawan. This roused them to fury and they attacked a number of Hindus passing near their *mohallas*. As spears and daggers were used not infrequently by both parties, there were several cases of serious injuries.

Apart from these general incidents there were some special occurrences.

*Mirapur*—This is a village on the fringe of Allahabad. A group of Muslims from a neighbouring *mohalla* led by a notorious *budmash* took advantage of the prevailing disorder and swooped down on the village for purposes of loot. The Hindus resisted them for a while but then owing to the superior number of the Muslims the Hindus retired. It is stated on behalf of the Hindus that this was a pre-arranged affair and a drum was beaten to summon Musalmans from the surrounding villages. A sad feature of the occurrence was the joining in by the Muslims of that village in the attack on their Hindu neighbours. The village was thoroughly looted and one Hindu was killed.

*Gangagunj*—This is a Hindu *mohalla* facing several Muslim *mohallas*—Nai Basti, Atala etc., largely inhabited by butchers etc. It is stated that a band of Muslims invaded Gangagunj and after a fight with the Hindus succeeded in injuring a number of Hindus and in desecrating a temple. The temple was immediately desecrated and the idols had been broken. Some idols under a *peepul* tree were also broken.

*Ram Krishna's firing*—This gentleman is a rich *bania* who fired at a Muslim crowd and killed 2 men and a woman. It is his case that he was in grave danger and fired in self-defence. I am inclined to think that the danger was not great as he imagined and he might well have done without the firing, specially as the *Kotwali* was almost within a stone's throw.

*Temple incidents*—I have already referred to the desecration of the temple at Gangagunj. There was also a desecration in another *mohalla*—Shahgunj, but I think it was not premeditated here. During one of the street contests the Muslims pushed back the Hindus and reached this small road-side temple. They entered and used various idols and stones there as missiles to be thrown at Hindus.

Another temple incident is said to have occurred at Katghar on the morning of the 10th. The Hindus state that early in the morning a number of Mohamadans came to this temple quietly and removed the idols and threw them about near the temple. As soon as the Hindus observed this they raised an alarm and the Mohamadans immediately withdrew. The Hindus have named a number of Muslims whom they claim to have identified. These persons are some of the leading (though poor) Muslim residents of the *mohalla*. There can be no doubt that some one did remove the idols, but after an enquiry I have come to the conclusion that the case started against the Muslims is wholly false. Most of the persons named are innocent, but they have been reported against to terrify the Muslim community! As a result, the Muslims have brought an entirely false case of grievous hurt against the principal Hindus there. I think the work of displacing the idols must have been done by one or utmost two persons, and it is not wholly impossible that a Hindu did it. There has been an ancient feud between some Hindus and Muslims in the village over gambling transactions and the matter has gone to court more than once. I think that one of the persons concerned with this dispute must have misbehaved in this matter at the temple.

An interesting point came out in connection with the temple. It is dedicated to some *devi* and it is freely patronised in times of sickness, especially small pox, by many of the poorer Musalmans; who make offerings and take the earth of the temple floor to apply to the body.

I learnt of this Katghar temple incident on the 11th. At that time I did not know about the far more serious case at Gangagunj. I thought that the desecration of a temple would irritate the Hindus very much and make matters worse. We therefore went to the principal Muslim leaders and suggested they might do something to ease the situation. Thereupon they issued a notice condemning the act and saying that whoever had done it had erred against religion. No press was open to print this notice so it was duplicated and a few hundred copies distributed.

I have been surprised to find that there is no deep feeling amongst the Hindus regarding these temple desecrations. A few of them were deeply grieved but most of them attached far greater importance to personal injury and mentioned the temple incidents almost casually.

A deplorable feature of the disturbances has been the treatment received by Muslims in the better class Hindu *mohallas*. On the night of the 7th a poor Musalman, resident of the *mohalla*, was nearly killed with daggers by some well-to-do Hindus in their *mohalla*. The next day another Mohamadan, Hafizuddin, a Congress worker, tried to go

through the principal Hindu *mohallas*. He was asked not to risk it, but he refused to believe that any resident of those *mohallas* would attack him as he was personally known to all of them. He lived nearby and used to pass that way daily. So he went with another Mohamadan. They were attacked and it is very doubtful if they would have escaped with their lives, if a Hindu, the executive officer of our Municipality, had not jumped to their rescue and smuggled them into his house.

On the 9th a group of Hindus and Muslims—P. D. Tandon, Manzar Ali, Zahur Ahmad etc.—made a tour of the affected areas. In the Hindu *mohallas* they had to face a very threatening attitude and in spite of Tandon's presence, the Muslims present narrowly escaped a bad beating. Even Manzar Ali, although he almost looks like a Hindu and is very well-known there, was advised by a friend or two to retire quietly into one of the houses. This experience was repeated near Bharti Bhawan. In both these places the Hindus who threatened belonged to the better classes.

A very large number of men and women go to see the Ram Lila procession. These people found it difficult to go to their homes owing to the outbreak of the disturbances. Thousands were thus roped up in small houses, in some cases for two or three days. Two large Municipal lorries, meant for the removal of rubbish, were used on the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th to take these people to their homes. One of the petty grievances of the Muslims is that the Municipality thus favoured the Hindus and removed their *lathiwalas*. As a matter of fact women were chiefly taken. In one or two places stones were thrown at the lorries. The drivers of both the lorries are Musalmans and Hindus were at first not willing to trust them. But both the drivers worked very hard and even the Hindu Sabha proposes to show an appreciation of their work.

The position now is that the minor cases have been disposed of. A number of major cases—murder, dacoity etc.—are still pending, and fresh reports are made daily. A large number of these reports are probably false. Most of the persons arrested so far are Musalmans chiefly because of the Mirapur incident. Police officers are almost obviously partisan, each one trying to favour his own community. The *Kotwal* and most of the Sub-Inspectors being Muslims, there is a general impression amongst the Hindus that great favour is being shown to the Muslims by the authorities. I think this is an exaggerated impression.

The Mohamadan leaders now propose that all cases be withdrawn. This course was adopted in 1917 when a Hindu-Muslim riot occurred here. The Hindu Sabha strongly opposes this.

I have written these impressions in great haste and under fever. I am afraid there must be repetitions in them and vague statements which the context may not justify. But I did not wish to delay sending a report any longer. I do not think it will be desirable for the present to give publicity to my conclusions or impressions.

Jawaharlal Nehru

**84. To Mahatma Gandhi**

Allahabad  
24-10-24

My dear Bapuji,

I forgot to mention in my record of impressions of Allahabad one fairly important matter. A headstone from a supposed grave was removed secretly one night during the disturbances. This "grave" has a short history. A small area in the heart of Allahabad has recently been the scene of operations of this local Improvement Trust. Many houses have been demolished, a road widened, and it was proposed to have a small park. A grave was however discovered under one of the houses and it was alleged by many Mussalmans that there were other graves also, and that the place was in fact a graveyard. As such they laid claim to the land. It is said that the grave in question is not a real one and was made in the course of few hours to give strength to the Muslim case. The Magistrate enquired into the matter (long before the riots) and held that the grave was a recently made one and the headstone had been brought over from some other older grave. I am myself inclined to think that it is a fictitious grave. However, whether the grave is real or not, the headstone was undoubtedly removed during the riots. It is not known who did it but very probably some Hindus must have done it.

The attempts to bring the Hindus and Muslims together have failed on account of the cases. The Hindus would not agree to the withdrawal of the main cases.

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 10488.

Meanwhile an attempt is being made by some Hindus to boycott Muslim vegetable shops (*Kunjras*). Hindu *Kunjras* have started shops. Hindu butchers have also applied for licences.

Father is going to Nagpur tonight. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will meet him there tomorrow. I shall go to Gorakhpur for the Provincial Conference on the 29th.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

### 85. The Gorakhpur 'Swaraj' Resolution<sup>1</sup>

Sir,—I have just seen your comment on the resolution relating to 'Swaraj' passed by the Gorakhpur Conference<sup>2</sup>. May I be permitted to point out that some of your remarks are based on incorrect data? All the proceedings of the Gorakhpur Conference—resolutions, speeches etc., were in Hindustani and the report in the *Leader* is, I presume, based on translations and summaries made by your correspondent. As a result of this, a number of mistakes have crept in.

The resolution on 'Swarajya', after desiring the Congress to define the word, requested that the definition should state that 'Swarajya' meant *purna swatantrata* and that the system of government should be *prajatantric*, which was stated and understood to mean 'democratic'. The word 'republican' was, so far as I am aware, not thought of by any one. In my speech I made clear what I understood by the resolution. Personally I said I was for complete independence. I am against the idea of empire and of one country forcibly ruling over another. But the resolution, I said, did not go so far as that. It stated that India should have full freedom and must have a democratic system of government. Full freedom meant, I added, control over police, army and finances. If this freedom could be gained and kept consistently with a connection with England, the resolution certainly did not taboo such connection. The resolution did not aim at separation from England but at full freedom.

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 7 November 1924.
2. At the Gorakhpur Conference of 1924 an unsuccessful attempt was made to bring about a compromise between the No-changers, the Swarajists, the Independents and the Liberals.

I also laid stress on the fact that the resolution, even if approved of and adopted by the Congress would not alter the article of Congress and that article expressly leaves the question open and both those who believe in Dominion government and in fuller freedom come under it. The Congress would thus remain open, as it should, to every shade of opinion on the subject. It may be that the advocates of Dominion rule may bring round others to their view and at a subsequent stage make the Congress declare in favour of such Dominion rule, whatever that may be. I shall personally, however, live in the hope that both Indians and Englishmen will adopt the view that the only sane government for any country is a completely free government and that only thus can healthy friendly relations be established between different countries.

I regret deeply that this resolution of the Gorakhpur Conference has pained you and made you think that to talk of common action is idle. This was far from its purpose. You will, I trust, agree with me that it is all to the good that frank expression of views should take place, and that few things are more harmful to a people than suppression of opinion for fear of the consequences. And is it such a bad thing after all that some of us should think and dream of an India not under any kind of duress, perfectly free to take the road of her choice, and co-operating on an equal footing with other nations for the advancement of humanity?

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad,  
Nov. 5, 1924

**86. To Lala Lajpat Rai<sup>1</sup>**

14/11/1924

My dear Lalaji,

Your letter No. 2042 dt. 7th Nov. There is some mystery about the draft National Pact. I do not know much about it myself. Dr. Ansari

1. A.I.C.C. unnumbered File.

sent me the report just before the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad. No one had any time to read it properly and the committee ultimately accepted the suggestion that it should be circulated amongst the members. In accordance with that direction I have circulated it. Personally I do not think much attention will be paid to it now after the Unity Conference. Mahatmaji so far as I know was not at all in favour of such a pact.

I think most people know that the last report gives Dr. Ansari's views only but in case you wish to make this clear, a statement can be made to the A.I.C.C. at Bombay.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



1. To Sri Prakasa

## MISCELLANEOUS

Anand Bhawan,

Allahabad

7 October 1923

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Your loving welcome was pleasant to read. Being very human myself I cannot help being touched by my friends' warm greetings. But I confess I do not understand why a fortnight in the Nabha jails<sup>1</sup> should have given me a push up towards heaven. I have returned to Allahabad twice before after serving much longer periods in jail but nobody took much notice of my return. Yesterday, however, there was quite a seething mass of humanity at the station to welcome and embarrass me!

I have wired to Sampurnanand accepting the presidency of the conference.<sup>2</sup> Indeed I had little choice left and could hardly act otherwise. I feel that I am in a most unhappy position. It was difficult enough at any time and with ample leisure to have to prepare a presidential address. This year it is specially hard for the president to say anything worth saying or worth doing. I have a very few days before the 2nd and they are full up with engagements. The Municipal Board<sup>3</sup> has kept all the important matters for me and I have to tackle them immediately. Local Congress affairs require looking into and various election meetings are being held. On top of this I am not well. Various causes have conspired to make me indisposed and weak. I have not felt quite so feeble physically for a long time. Nothing serious is the matter but for the present this does affect my capacity for work. I can hardly keep standing for long. I have taken almost an off day

1. Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.L.

2. (1890-1921) son of Dr. Bhuparao Desai and a contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge. General Secretary, U.P.P.C.C. 1923-1924, General Secretary of the Congress 1927 and 1931, after 1947 High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, Minister, Government of India and Governor of Assam, Madras and Maharashtra.

3. For the sketch of Nagda see Vol. I, Section 5.

4. United Provinces Provincial Conference.

5. Jauharlal was at this time Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board.



**I. To Sri Prakasa<sup>1</sup>**

Anand Bhawan,  
Allahabad  
7 October 1923

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Your loving welcome was pleasant to read. Being very human myself I cannot help being touched by my friends' warm greetings. But I confess I do not understand why a fortnight in the Nabha jails<sup>3</sup> should have given me a push up towards heaven. I have returned to Allahabad twice before after serving much longer periods in jail but nobody took much notice of my return. Yesterday, however, there was quite a seething mass of humanity at the station to welcome and embarrass me!

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3. For the arrest at Nabha see Vol. I, Section 5.

4. United Provinces Provincial Conference.

5. Jawaharlal was at this time Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board.

today and have spent the greater part of it resting in bed. From to-morrow I shall have no rest.

I shall gladly stop with you during the conference days. I propose to arrive on the early morning of the 13th by the night train. I have to be here on the 12th evening for an important meeting of the Municipal Board. I want to leave Benares as soon as I possibly can to go to Amritsar for a day and then to Jullunder for the Sikh League.<sup>6</sup> I am sorry to hear of Shiva Prasad's anger at the conference. Hope he will calm down.

Yours afly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

I am afraid I have no photo of mine recently taken. I might find one of the old unregenerate days in English attire. Do you want it?

6. The Central Sikh League, set up after 1919 with Mahatma Gandhi's encouragement to promote nationalist feeling among the Sikhs.

## 2. Presidential Address at U.P. Conference<sup>1</sup>

Our trial was going on in Nabha and for many days we had been cut off from the outside world. A friend happened to gain admittance to the court room and he whispered to me that I had been elected president of this conference. Being very human I felt elated at this signal mark of confidence and honour. But immediately I thought of the long line of presidents, full of wisdom and courage, who had preceded me, and of the great responsibility of this office, and I shuddered at the prospect. And then, being human, I felt pleased at being in jail and so escaping the burden of this responsibility. But the Nabha Administration has willed otherwise. And the few days that have elapsed since my discharge under a suspended sentence, have been, I am ashamed to confess, days of illness for me. Today I stand before you an object for pity and indulgence.

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

Jawaharlal was ill and could not attend the conference held in Varanasi but his address was read in his absence on 13 October 1923.

It is customary on these occasions to present a carefully thought out and previously prepared address, which is usually printed and distributed. I have not had the opportunity to do so, and even if I had had the time, I doubt if I could have produced anything worthy of record. You have chosen to cast this burden on me at a strange and critical period in our national history when rival theories and principles are at war with each other and the foundations of our great movement for freedom, as we have known it in the last three years or more, have been shaken; when senseless and criminal bigotry struts about in the name of religion and instils hatred and violence into the people. The best and wisest of guidance is necessary for us; how can I presume to show the way?

Less than a month ago the Congress met in Special Session at Delhi<sup>2</sup> and arrived at some momentous decisions. As a subordinate organisation we cannot go counter to those decisions. We must accept them and work them to the best of our ability. But I would have you consider where those decisions lead us to. Let us be quite clear in our minds about our goal and about the manner of reaching it. There was no doubt in us three years ago.

In 1920 and 1921 we were full of faith and confidence. We did not sit down to debate and argue. We knew we were right and we marched on from victory to victory. We felt the truth in us and every fibre of our being thrilled at the idea of our fighting for the right, and fighting in a manner unique and glorious. Those were brave days, the memory of which will endure and be a cherished possession for all of us. Then, our leader left us and, weak and unstable and inconstant, we began to doubt and despair. The faith of old went and with it much of our confidence. There followed a year of strife and dispute and mutual recrimination, and all our energy was diverted to combatting and checkmating our erstwhile comrades in the rival camp. Pro-changer and no-changer went for each other, and the average no-changer was not behind the pro-changer in forgetting the basic lesson of nonviolence and charity and in imputing the basest of motives to persons of a different way of thinking. We failed to keep even our tempers, how then could we exercise right judgment? And so gradually nonviolent, noncooperation began to lose some of its fundamental features and for many became an empty husk, devoid of real significance.

2. The Special Session of the Congress was held in the third week of September, 1923. Maulana Azad was the President. The Session passed a permissive resolution on "Council entry and exercising the right of voting at the forthcoming elections", as a compromise between those in favour of Council entry and those opposed to it.

The Delhi Congress, it is said, has brought about a compromise between the two rival schools of thought and put an end to this long agony. If the Congress results in ending the bitterness and suspicion and in reintroducing in our politics charity of judgment and non-violence in our thoughts, then indeed it has largely succeeded. But I do not think it is correct to describe the principal resolutions of the Congress as compromise resolutions; they were only so in so far as certain groups acquiesced in them. I do not think there can be any real or stable compromise between the two principal viewpoints which have been fighting for mastery in the country. They are fundamentally different. They are both honourable methods and their advocates are brave men and keen thinkers, but nonetheless they differ radically.

The Delhi Congress, it has been remarked, marks the end of non-cooperation. I wonder at any one, who has lived through the last three or four years in India, making this assertion. It passes my comprehension how even a resolution of the Congress can put an end to a mighty movement. If India has at all imbibed the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, if even a group of men remain true to that gospel, then noncooperation cannot die. And if all of us are utterly unworthy of this teaching and incapable of acting in accordance with it, even then a subsequent generation will wield the mighty weapon and prove to the world that this is the only way and the best way which ensures true freedom and ends strife. Nonviolent noncooperation cannot die. It has gone beyond the boundaries of our country and is the property of the world.

I shall not presume to criticize the Delhi Congress, but I do think that several of its decisions were opposed to the movement as started by Mahatma Gandhi; they were contrary to the basic principles, as stated by Mahatmaji, of nonviolent noncooperation. That of course is no reason why we should not change our programme, if we are otherwise convinced that a change is necessary. But even from the point of view of the original programme, I welcome the Delhi decisions. They do mean a going back and it is always difficult and painful to do so when one believes firmly in the old method. But I believe that this going back, or rather this permission to others to go back, was necessary at this stage. It may have been possible for those who believed in this, to get a verdict from the Congress against any change. But I doubt if this would have done much good to noncooperation. I am not in the least afraid of difference of opinion amongst ourselves. That must continue. But I confess to experiencing a feeling of humiliation when I saw that our noble movement, nurtured on high ideals and voluntary suffering, was being converted into two party caucuses each

devoting its money and its energy to raising delegates who would lift up their hands at the bidding of their leaders. Noncooperation will prosper not by resorting to such Western political methods and manœuvres but by its utter purity and直ness and by its appeal to the masses. I almost wish that the Calcutta Special Congress in 1920 had not accepted the noncooperation policy and programme. This acceptance overwhelmed us from the very beginning and the weight of numbers paralysed us. We could then have marched on as a compact body, strong in our faith and in our discipline, and, at the right moment, have converted the masses and the Congress to our viewpoint. The process was reversed and we have suffered accordingly. The basis of noncooperation is direct action and this involves continuous suffering. No one can expect large masses of people to indulge continuously in direct action. Only the elect can do that, and the masses can sympathise with them and join them occasionally for a short while. If the Congress really represents the people, it is natural that it should attempt to go back a little to some kind of constitutional action, whenever large numbers of people are tired of direct action. To the eager, ever ready for the fray, this is painful. But there is no room for despondency. Only a heavier burden is cast on those who have to keep the method of direct action always before the people; they have to fight on whilst the main army rests or is engaged in peaceful pursuits. Let them rest assured that when the time comes the main army will not fail them. And so I am content with the Delhi decisions. Any attempt to force the issue would have had unhappy results.

What then is our aim and what should be our means? Our creed is short and simple but it shelters many interpretations. We have made it abundantly clear that we are fighting for complete freedom. We have not the slightest interest in provincial autonomy or the transfer of subjects in the Government of India. Full internal freedom means that we must control the finances and the army and police. So long as we do not control these we have no freedom in India. This is the minimum. But the question has arisen whether we should not define "Swaraj" in our creed as "Independence". Personally, I shall welcome the day when the Congress declares for independence. I am convinced that the only proper and right goal for India is independence. Anything short of it, whether it is styled Dominion rule or a partnership in the British Commonwealth of Nations or by any other name, is derogatory to the dignity of India. There can be no peace or friendship between India and England except on the basis of perfect equality and this equality cannot be gained so long as India remains an appendage of the British Empire. It may be that India after gaining independence, of her own free will, chooses to ally herself to England.

But that can come only after the attainment of independence. I would, therefore, on general grounds, strongly advocate that we should keep independence as our objective.

Another and an equally potent reason with me is my belief that the British Empire today is an instrument for evil and it has done and is doing great harm. It is the solitary representative of blatant imperialism on a large scale. I do not wish India to associate with this imperialism or be a party in any way to the exploitation of the people of Asia and Africa. It should be the business of India rather to fight this imperialism and to put an end to it.

A third reason why I would like to keep independence always in view is to change the outlook of our people. The British Government in India by its subtle policy and methods has created an idea amongst many of us that British rule in India is one of the inevitable things against which it is useless to contend. The N.C.O. movement has largely shattered this idea, but it still remains and the sooner it is removed entirely the better. I suppose there is hardly an Indian who does not in his heart of hearts desire independence, but there are many who dare not say so, many who think that it is unwise to make the assertion at this stage. Let us get rid of this mentality, this cowardice. We may not be strong enough to gain our object for a while, but we should be brave enough to declare it and to work for it.

I would therefore keep the ideal of independence before the people and accustom them to it. I am not desirous of changing the Congress creed at this stage. This would give rise to unnecessary debate and controversy and might narrow the Congress and exclude some people. Let us keep the Congress open for all. When the people have thoroughly grasped and approved of the idea, the change in the creed will automatically follow. Till then it is not desirable to force a change.

I have already indicated that I believe in the noncooperation movement as inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. I believe that the salvation of India, and indeed of the rest of the world, will come through non-violent noncooperation. Violence has had a long enough career in the world, it has been weighed repeatedly and found wanting. The present condition of Europe is eloquent testimony of the inefficacy of violence to settle anything. I believe that violence in Europe will go from excess to excess and will perish in the flames it has itself kindled and be reduced to ashes. Many people smile and fling cheap sneers at the prospect of nonviolence ever coming into its own and directing the affairs of men and nations. They point to the frailty of human nature and the universal prevalence of anger and hatred and violence. I am afraid few of us are free from these. I know, to my sorrow, that I am full of violent thoughts and can with difficulty drag myself back

to the straight and narrow path. But those who mock and smile would do well if they realised the power of ideas and if they studied the progress of this particular idea. For it has already caught the imagination of the thinkers of the world and the Indian masses have been wonderfully affected by it.

Noncooperation and nonviolence, these are the two essential ingredients of this movement. The idea of noncooperation is simple enough, clear to the meanest intellect, but nonetheless few of us had realised it, excepting partly during the Bengal partition days, till Mahatmaji issued his call to action. Evil flourishes only because we tolerate it and assist in it. The most despotic and tyrannical Government can only carry on because the people it misgovern themselves submit to it. England holds India in bondage because Indians co-operate with Englishmen and thereby strengthen British rule. Withdraw that cooperation and the fabric of foreign rule collapses. That follows automatically. It requires no proof. But in spite of the logic and of the inevitability of the result, many of us cannot adopt this obvious method. The subtle poison of British rule has enervated us and emasculated us and made cowards of us all. We have lost the spirit of adventure and we cannot take a risk even though the prize be so splendid as the freedom of India. The idea of noncooperation has taken root and has sunk down to the masses, but sustained courage is lacking to give outward expression to this idea. With many it is an economic question. But what shall we say of those who even without this incentive give their time and energy and money to organising innumerable functions for the honour and glory of English officials? To such a depth have we sunk that men of intelligence and education amongst us think it no shame to help in their own dishonour. I make no complaint of the English officials. They are brave men serving their country to the best of their ability. I wish our men were equally brave and would think as often of the honour and dignity of their own country.

I firmly believe in the efficacy of nonviolence. But nonviolence has nothing to do with cowardice or weakness. Mahatmaji repeatedly stated that even violence is preferable to cowardice. Fear and cowardice are the greatest sins and unhappily we have enough of them in our country. Our anger and hatred are really the outcome of our fear and impotence. If we could get rid of this fear and cowardice there would be little hatred left or any other obstacle to our onward march. Let us therefore root out this cowardice and give it no shelter. Above all, let it not masquerade, as it unfortunately often does, as nonviolence. "A world of evil", says a great Frenchman, "is preferable to emasculated good." There is too much soppiness and softness in us, too much

emasculated good. One is almost driven to the conclusion that we are inanely and passively good, if good that is, because this is the path of least resistance and because we have not the courage to be evil. We dare not sin, though we think of it often enough and would like to do so. This is a hateful condition. It is dishonest, neuter and hypocritical. Better the honest man of evil who sins consciously and knowingly and with the strength that is in him. When he reforms he will be a tower of strength to the cause of good, because his foundations are strong. But the inanely and hypocritically good can be of use to no cause. There is no strength in them, their foundations are laid on the shifting sands. And so there is no place for the cowardly in a nonviolent movement. Better a man of violence who has the courage of his convictions.

I am laying stress on this question of nonviolence for it is well that we should be clear about it after some years of suspension. There has apparently been a recrudescence of the violent revolutionary movement in Bengal. I can appreciate the impatience and longing for freedom which impels many a young man to violent action; I can admire the reckless courage which does not count the cost. But I cannot understand how anyone imagines that sporadic violence can bring freedom nearer to us. Freedom is our right and, according to old custom and the ordinary law of nations, we are entitled even to resort to violence to achieve it. But even freedom would be a doubtful and a tainted thing if we have to resort to foul means to gain it. I pray that this fate may never overtake our great movement. Violence may be justified under certain circumstances, but it must be open and above board and straightforward; but no circumstances will justify secret killing, the dagger of the assassin and the stab in the dark. No nation has yet profited by these methods; they but sully a great cause and alienate world sympathy. On no account therefore can we take to the bomb and the dagger. And those who unthinkingly adopt these methods injure the cause they have at heart. We cannot even think of open and organised violence. We have really little choice left in the matter, and even if we did not on other grounds prefer it, we would be driven to nonviolent noncooperation. Bolshevism and Fascism are the ways of the West today. They are really alike and represent different phases of insensate violence and intolerance. The choice for us is between Lenin<sup>3</sup> and Mussolini<sup>4</sup> on the one side and Gandhi on the other. Can there be any doubt as to who represents the soul of India today?

3. (1870-1924); the architect of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia of 1917.

4. (1883-1945); Fascist dictator of Italy from 1923 till his execution in 1945.

India made the choice more than three years ago. She chose the path of nonviolence and suffering, of direct action and peaceful revolution. From that there is no going back. There may occasionally appear to be some slackness or some change. We may have our bad patches and our moments of despondency. But the vision once seen cannot be forgotten and the glory of suffering for a great cause will not be given up. Again and again the chance will come to us, and while the wise argue, the brave will go forth, heeding not the consequences, full of joy at the thought that they have been privileged to serve the great cause. Learned disputations take place frequently in the country about the preparation for civil disobedience. Much can be done in disciplining the people and in creating a favourable atmosphere. But courage and the will to suffer cannot be instilled into the people by lectures or tours. Personal example alone can do it and it may be that a little incident may electrify the whole of India and make us launch a mighty campaign of civil disobedience. Till that time comes we may have many opportunities given us of testing our mettle and hardening our fibre. Let us take advantage of them and keep the practice and ideal of direct action and peaceful revolution ever before the people. We need not worry about opportunities and chances. They will surely come to us. Let us see to it that they find us ready when they do come.

But our suffering would serve little purpose if we cannot deal sanely with our communal questions and exorcise the spirit of strife and bigotry. A few broken heads matter little but the reason for this does matter. It is most strange that for the most trivial things, for childish superstition or silly prejudice people take risks and lose their reason in a sea of anger. The vital things, the real things that matter pass unnoticed. Ignorance and bigotry put an end to all rational thought. It is almost useless to argue or convince. Religion is degraded and in its name are done the most shameful things. Indeed religion has become the excuse for many sins. It has little sanctity left and it is trotted out in season and out of season and all argument naturally ends. We seem to have drifted back to a state of affairs which prevailed in Europe during the dark ages when to think rationally was considered an evil. I think it is time for persons who wish to regard religion as something good and sacred, and the exercise of rational thought as essential for human progress, to protest with all their might against all kinds of bigotry and superstition.

A great deal is being said in the press and from the platform about the protection of communal interests. It is reported that associations for the purpose are being formed. So far as I can gather all this sound and fury have little to do with action. We have little courage left for

effective action. Our helplessness enrages us and so we camouflage our fear with brave words and not daring to stand up to our real opponent we attack our brother and our neighbour. That has ever been the way of slaves. The Delhi Congress has done much to bring peace. Let us endeavour to put an end to all activities which are directed against another community and concentrate on the main issue. We have no time for mutual skirmishes.

I wish to say little about the certification of the Salt Tax<sup>5</sup> and the Kenya decision.<sup>6</sup> Enough has been said about them already. They but strengthen our contention that freedom is the only remedy and noncooperation the only means. Even Mr. Shastri, with his abundant faith in the imperial idea, has reconsidered his position and suggested methods closely akin to noncooperation. Even so will wisdom dawn on others. Nor do I wish to say much about Nagpur or the brave fight that was put up there. Our province took a worthy part in it, and no-changer and pro-changer joined hands to vindicate the honour of the national flag. Today all eyes are turned to the north where the gallant Akalis are challenging the might of Government. They have taken up the proud position of the vanguard in our army of freedom and they are fully worthy of it. I am sure your hearts go out to them in full sympathy and admiration, and when the time comes, as come it will, we will not be lacking in our support of them.

I have nearly finished. I would but remind you that no fight can go on without continuous preparation behind the lines. That is dull work but it is essential work. The real test of our perseverance and ability is the success we achieve in the constructive programme. We should therefore strengthen our Congress Committees and, above all, take the message of *khaddar* to every home. That was the last word of the Mahatma when he went to jail. We shall forget it at our peril. The Delhi Congress has suggested various kinds of activity. Every one of us, whatever his views may be, can find something to suit him. No one can offer an excuse for shirking work.

Before I end I would mention a predecessor of mine in this office, one whose life is one long record of suffering cheerfully borne for the sake of the country. Maulana Hasrat Mohani offered battle to the British Government and went to jail long before noncooperation had made jail-going an easy matter. Bravest and staunchest of the soldiers

5. The Central Legislative Assembly refused to authorise an increase in the salt tax, but the Governor-General certified it as necessary for financial stability.
6. The Congress had condemned the attitude of the British Government in Kenya towards the Indians resident there.

of freedom, whom nothing could divert or turn away, who would not even give in to his comrades, much less to an alien Government. Whilst in jail, serving out a long sentence, he has been awarded another sentence of 2½ years for a jail offence. The Government perhaps think that they can break his spirit or frighten him by this shocking and vindictive sentence. They little know him. I am sure that your deep sympathy and greetings will go out to this bright jewel of our province.

I have had my say. I wish to assure you in all honesty that I am full of hope. I have little patience with the pessimists and croakers. I am convinced that political freedom will come to us before long, if not entirely through our strength, then through the weakness of Europe and England. For Europe is in the melting pot, and England, with all her seeming might, cannot but be affected by the collapse of the Continent. Wars and the rumours of wars follow each other in quick succession. They will continue till the lesson of nonviolence is learnt by bitter experience. So political freedom for India is certain. But I sometimes fear that when it comes to us it may find us lacking in true strength and the greater qualities. And instead of being a shining example to the rest of the world, India may become but a cheap and inefficient replica of the countries of the West. Let us take the longer view from now and try to avoid this, and build up a great and strong India, worthy of the great leader whom God has blessed us with.

### 3. To the Students of Allahabad<sup>1</sup>

Fellow students,

I venture to address you as one of yourselves although it is many years, more years than I care to remember, since I left the narrow streets and broad backs of Cambridge. But the memory lingers, and the desire to learn and seek the company of books. The whirlpool of politics has caught me for the present, an unwilling victim, but often I cast a wistful eye on the days that are no more and sometimes wish that the fates may be kinder to me in the future.

1. This leaflet, distributed widely in the town, is to be found in J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

But I desire to speak to you about the Viceroy's coming visit. How is he coming here? In what capacity? And why are some people desirous of welcoming him? Not as a great lawyer, or a diplomat, or an experienced statesman, or even as a man of note. He is coming here as the Viceroy of India, the head of the Government of India, and as such you are asked to welcome him and show him honour. It is not a personal matter. It happens that Lord Reading is the Viceroy today. But whoever the person occupying the office might have been you would have been asked to join in the welcome. For this welcome is to an institution and to an idea. The institution is the British Government in India and the idea is the idea of British rule in India. If anyone desires to exhibit his love for the present Government in India and all its works and a wish that it may continue for an indefinite period to govern India then only should he rightly participate in these welcomes and celebrations. It is not a question of any courtesy to Lord Reading.

It is said that we must impress Lord Reading with the importance of Allahabad so that the capital may remain here. It is hoped, I suppose, that a warm welcome will melt his heart and incline him favourably towards our city. And in this lively expectation of favour to come we must put aside all wider issues and principles, forget the national struggle, forget the sorrow and suffering and join in the paean of welcome. Is it worth this, the change of capital? And is this the way to bring about a change?

Our joining in the welcome means our giving a certificate to Government for its past and present policy. It means an acquiescence, if not approval, in the continued incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi, in the certification of the salt tax, in the shamefully weak policy of the Government in regard to Kenya. Above all it means an approval of what is happening today in Bengal and the Punjab. Do you wish to set your seal of approval on the use of the Regulation of 1818, and the spiriting away of people without charge or trials? Have you not read of the agony of the Sikh people? Little news is allowed to come but we know that Government is trying its utmost to crush the brave and gallant people who with their backs to the wall are fighting for their very existence. They ask for your sympathy, for a gesture of encouragement. Will you not even send your sympathy in this hour of their trial? Will you not make that gesture? Do not participate, I pray you, in the welcomes and the celebrations attending the Viceroy's visit. Let the Viceroy and his Government know that you strongly disapprove of their policy. Let the gallant Sikhs see this gesture of yours and draw encouragement from it. Let empty footpaths and empty

chairs speak out the minds of the students of Allahabad on the present policy of Government.

Jawaharlal Nehru

October 27th, 1923

**4. Telegram to Devadas Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

16 January 1924

Your telegram. All most anxious<sup>2</sup> here. Convey our loving homage to Bapu.

Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 8130.
2. Mahatma Gandhi underwent an operation for appendicitis on 12 January at the Sassoon Hospital in Poona.

**5. To Devadas Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

18/1/1924

My dear Devadas,

And so you and a few others have monopolised Bapu and you would have others keep away. It is well for Bapu and I hope your instructions will be obeyed. But some unfortunates would have been tremendously cheered by even a distant glimpse. Specially when the

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 8130.

sword of Damocles is always there to threaten them and remind them of a quieter, if duller, world. Too many odd jobs and not a few worries have succeeded in making me even more excitable and cantankerous than I ever was, and a sight of Bapu would have been good for me. As it is I am afraid it will be a long time before I have the chance of seeing him.

You will wonder what I am writing about. The fact is I have done my utmost to land myself in jail. I have taken part in a petty riot and I richly deserve a spell of jail to quieten my over-excitable nature. You may or may not have read about an incident at the Sangam here a few days ago. Malaviyaji, greatly put out by a silly order of the Magistrate, decided to offer Satyagraha. It was difficult for me to restrain myself when there was talk of Satyagraha specially by Malaviyaji and on I went, like the men of the Light Brigade, with little thought or reasoning. However it is something to be tried for a disobedience of law with Malaviyaji as one's co-accused. Tandon, Krishna Kant, Ramakant<sup>2</sup>, Manzar Ali and many others were there. So it will be a merry company. But I do not like the idea of going to jail on a false issue. And then I miss seeing Bapu.

It is by no means certain yet that the case will be started but it is highly likely. If nothing happens I propose to go to Bombay on the 28th. The Working Committee will probably meet on the 30th there.

My loving regards to Bapu but don't worry him by any mention of me.

Yours affly.,  
Jawaharlal

2. The eldest son of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

6. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
21/3/24

My dear Mahmud,

Thanks for your letters and enquiries. I arrived here today. I have had some fever since I left you at Lar Road Station. However I went to Nangarh and Bridgemangunj as arranged. I have still got some temperature. I presume a short rest will put me right.

Thanks for the manuscript address. I thought I had explained to you that I could not touch it or alter it. It is almost physically impossible for me to do so. So far as I am concerned it is done with.

May I say a thing to you which I have wanted to say for some little time? Why are you so emotional, or rather why do you exhibit your emotion so much? Surely emotion should not be cheapened, it is too valuable a commodity. The teaching of the West has made me value restraint a great deal and I feel that we as a race are continually indulging in emotionalism and lessening our activity thereby. We pitch everything in too high a key. And that is my standing complaint against Urdu & Persian poetry. It feels like "soppiness".

I have not read wholly your Urdu letter yet as it takes me some time to read Urdu and I have to write an answer soon as your man is returning.

I hope you have found every one well at home. I have had no news since I came and do not know what Mohamad Ali is doing.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 7. Message to the Vaikom Satyagrahis<sup>1</sup>

I thoroughly sympathise with the Thiyyas<sup>2</sup> and other so-called Untouchables and Unapproachables in their grievances against the caste Hindus in the South. I trust that they will stand up for their rights and by their firmness remove all their grievances. I hope also that the caste Hindus will not deny their brethren the ordinary rights of human beings.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 April 1924.

Satyagraha in Vaikom in Kerala was an agitation against the closure of temple roads to lower caste Hindus.

2. A community of Kerala which was for long classified as backward.

## 8. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Anand Bhawan

Allahabad

1.12.24

My dear Mahmud,

...I presume you do not wish to distress and embarrass me or my wife and yet you effectually succeed in doing so by sending large numbers of gifts without any apparent reason. It is obvious that our viewpoints on the subject are as the poles apart. For more than a year I think I have been begging you not to send me anything but you have not perhaps taken me seriously. I would beg of you again not to pain and embarrass me any more by sending gifts. Our superfluous cash, if we have any, can be utilised to much better advantage than by giving expensive presents to each other. There are many people who starve and the Tilak Swaraj Fund is still there.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

9. To A.M. Khwaja<sup>1</sup>

enough our degrees of earnestness might differ. The real question is how one faces the problems of the day. You are aware that I hold fairly radical and extreme views as regards the methods we should adopt to rid ourselves of the incubus of alien rule. I may or other stand and fight with standards of pose. But I do expect a certain minimum of effort.

25 Western Hostel  
Raisina,  
Delhi  
25/2/25

My dear Khwaja,

I could not answer your letter as I was bed-ridden owing to an operation<sup>2</sup>. Even now I am not permitted to sit up properly.

I have seen your statement in the papers. I must say that it is a very unconvincing document. Anyway it has failed to convince me. I think you were entirely in the wrong about the address affair<sup>3</sup>. This has nothing to do with cooperation or noncooperation. Even before noncooperation it was a bad and an undignified thing for public bodies to present addresses to Governors & their kind and I trust that this most unwholesome practice will end quite apart from the suspension or otherwise of noncooperation. I am not aware of any country where addresses are presented to Governors in the manner we manage these affairs in this damnable country. I am also convinced that we do not advance the interests of our Municipalities by trying to tickle the vanity of our Governors. If we have any request to make it is up to us to have a business interview with the officer concerned. The idea that our requests can only be contained in silver caskets does not appeal to me.

Ever yours,

Jawaharlal Nehru

A voter must know where his candidate stands and to do if an emergency arises. The Indian nation is likely to collapse till success is obtained but that may happen before then. Repression will repeatedly be indulged in by Government. On which side can one expect you to be when this contingency arises?

You must have read the minority report<sup>4</sup> of the Reforms Committee,

25 Feb 1925

<sup>3</sup> The Bengal Ordinance, promulgated in October 1924, provided for the secret of the arrest without their detection.

1. Khwaja Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal had had a minor operation in Delhi in February 1925. The surgeon was Dr. Ansari.
3. Khwaja, as Chairman of Aligarh Municipality, had read and presented a civic address to the Governor.

**10. An Invitation<sup>1</sup>**

15 May 1925

*To celebrate their father's 64th birthday*

Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Krishna Kumari Nehru would like you to join them at a Book Tea on Monday, April 20, at 5.30 p.m. You should represent a well known book in English, Hindi or Urdu, or any other book of international reputation. You will be required to guess the names of the books represented by others. The highbrows who make the largest number of correct guesses will be installed in seats of honour and presented with souvenirs of the occasion.

There will be tea (or *sherbet* if you prefer it) with the usual eatables (cocogem being used where necessary). If you stay long enough you may have ice cream and home made lemonade also.

An answer conveying your acceptance of this invitation will be appreciated.

Anand Bhawan,  
Allahabad  
April 15, 1925

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

My dear Mahmud,

As you do not wish to distress and embarrass me or my wife  
indeed, I am

**11. To Raja Motichand<sup>2</sup>**

I am sorry in doing so by sending large numbers  
of gifts. I have done so at reason. It is obvious that our viewpoints  
on the subject are at the poles apart. For more than a year I think  
I have been begging you not to send me anything but you have not  
perhaps taken me seriously. I would beg of you again not to pain  
and embarrass me any more by sending gifts. Our super  
if we have any, can be utilised to much better advantage than giving

15 May 1925

My dear Raja Sahab,<sup>3</sup>

I thank you for your letter of May 2nd. I am sorry for the delay in  
answering it.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1876-1934); a leading industrialist of Varanasi.

Most of us, I suppose, are for a free India. Our object is the same though our degrees of earnestness might differ. The real question is how one faces the problems of the day. You are aware that I hold fairly radical and extreme views as regards the methods we should adopt to rid ourselves of the incubus of alien rule. I would hardly expect you or others similarly placed to agree with me in everything I do or propose. But I do expect a certain minimum of effort for Swaraj, a certain degree of opposition to and resistance of Government where their proposals are clearly against the honour or the interests of the country, and a certain sympathy with those who at considerable sacrifice are marching ahead of others on the thorny path which leads to freedom. Any person who does not attain this minimum is a hindrance to Swaraj.

There are at present some clearly defined parties in the country. Do you belong to any of them? In the past have you belonged to any party? You have been a member of the Council of State for many years. May I know if you have been a regular attendant at its meetings? I ask this as I am informed that you have hardly attended a single meeting during the last two years. You will I trust agree with me that it is an expensive luxury to have a legislator who takes no interest in his work.

I am also informed that on the occasion of the voting on Bengal Ordinance<sup>3</sup> you sided with Government. Is this correct? You will remember that the whole country—including every party—condemned this ordinance. Any person who voted in favour of such an illegal and improper procedure of Government and against the declared wish of the country can hardly be said to have attained the minimum mentioned by me above.

A voter must know where his candidate stands and what he is likely to do if an emergency arises. The Indian national struggle is not likely to collapse till success is obtained but many things might happen before then. Repression will repeatedly be indulged in by Government. On which side can one expect you to be when this contingency arises?

Your must have read the minority report<sup>4</sup> of the Reforms Committee,

3. The Bengal Ordinance, promulgated in October 1924, provided for the arrest of suspects without warrant, their detention and confiscation of their property without trial.

4. In 1924 a Committee under Sir Alexander Muddiman was set up by the Government of India to examine the working of the 1919 Reforms. The majority of the members, three British and two Indians, held that their function was restricted to recommending methods for the better working of dyarchy. A minority of four Indians including Sir Tei Bahadur Sapru, however, held that dyarchy was unworkable.

published recently. Do you agree with it fully? Or do you think it does not go far enough or too far? In case you agree with it will you support it in its entirety in the Council of State and elsewhere? What other effective steps would you suggest our taking to gain our object? You will forgive me I hope for inflicting this long letter on you. I dislike elections being run on personal grounds. Votes should be asked for and given on grounds of principle alone and the fullest publicity should be given to the principles for which the candidate stands.

I shall thank you for a full answer and shall also invite you to make a public statement on the questions touched upon in this letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 12. To Raja Motichand<sup>1</sup>

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
25.5.25

My dear Raja Sahab,  
I thank you for your letter of the 24th May and for the trouble you have taken to send a detailed reply. I am afraid you are not quite correct in thinking that I am a "declared supporter of the Swaraj Party". In some matters they have had my sympathy and I have preferred them to a certain extent to others working in the Councils. But in the past I have differed from them also in many ways and I have not so far supported them in any way either by my vote or otherwise. It is probable that in the Council of State elections I may not take any part. I am not very much interested in them. But I cannot bind myself down to any particular course of action. The situation changes daily and I cannot say what I shall do six months hence. But you are right in assuming that the Swarajist viewpoint, although not mine, is nearer to mine than yours is likely to be.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L

I wrote to you as well as Major Dube<sup>2</sup> on the subject of your views and policies because I was interested in them and I could see no public announcement about them. I entirely disagree with the view that to seek election or claim a vote is a personal matter for one's friends and supporters only. It is a duty which every candidate owes to the electorate as well as the general public to proclaim clearly and fully what he stands for. Principles should get votes, not personalities.

I am glad to learn that you opposed the Bengal Ordinance in the Council of State.

I entirely agree with you that what is required is not only political but economic and educational work. We have been endeavouring to do the latter and I would invite your cooperation in making national education and the *khaddar* and *charkha* movement a success.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Major Ram Prasad Dube (1872-1936); after many years of service in Indore State, set up practice at the Allahabad High Court in 1919.

### 13. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Anand Bhawan  
Allahabad  
3/6/25

My dear Mahmud,

I am afraid I can do nothing for Hayat<sup>2</sup>. The post of superintendent of education in the municipality would have suited him perhaps but I have no connection with the Board now. The place is getting worse daily and I would not like to go near it. I know of no other post. I shall certainly bear Hayat in mind. But little is likely to come my way.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.I.  
2. Hasan Mohammad Hayat, from Aligarh, secretary to Maulana Mohamad Ali; participated in noncooperation movement and went to London with the Khilafat delegation.

Father is not here for me to consult on the point of Oudh Taluqdari Law you have mentioned. It is hardly necessary to trouble him as the Act is clear enough (Act 1 of 1869). All *taluqdars* whether they are Christian, Muslim or Hindu are governed by this Act in Matters of inheritance. I am surprised that none of our worthy enthusiasts has raised the cry that religion has been attacked because the personal law of *taluqdars* has been changed! Your question can only be answered after one knows in which list the *taluqdar's* name appears. Four lists were prepared under the Act. The first is a general list of all *taluqdars* and grantees. The law for each of the other lists is different from the other. In some cases as in list 2 all estates are im-*partible*—in other cases personal law is applied. You had better consult the Act. It is a small one.

You have sent so many *leechees* that we do not know what to do with them.

For heaven's sake don't call your son Jawaharlal. Jawahar by itself might pass, but the addition of 'lal' makes it odious.

I have no idea who will preside at the Cawnpore Congress, nor am I very much interested. Brehtter's is closed today and I am afraid I may not have time tomorrow to go to them. I shall try.

I go to Dalhousie day after tomorrow. My address there is Hurst Lodge.

Please give my love to your children and apologise to them on my behalf. I appreciate their little notes but I feel diffident in answering them.

Yours affly.,  
Jawaharlal

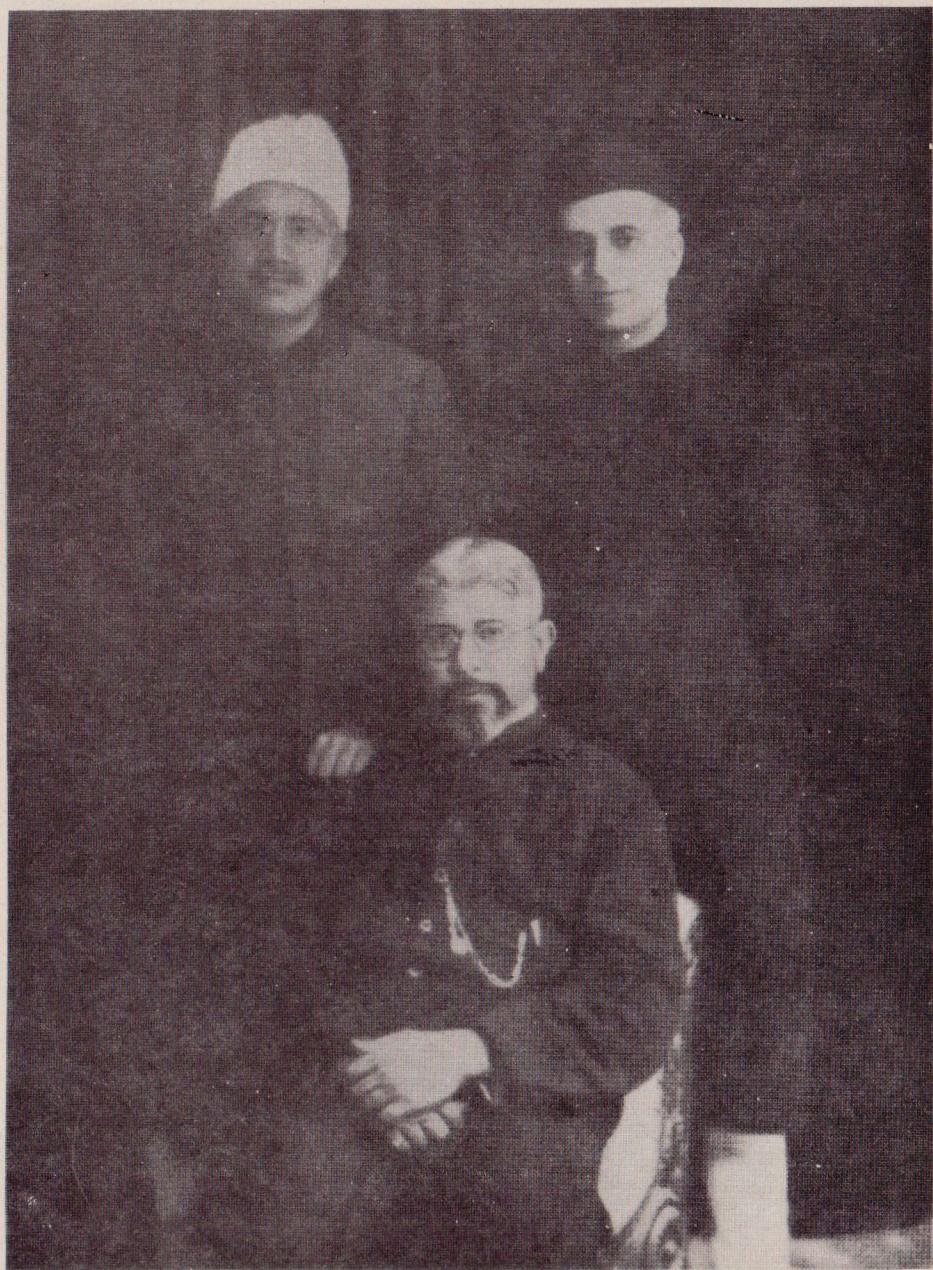
**14. To Syed Mahmud'**

Chamba  
18-6-25

My dear Mahmud,

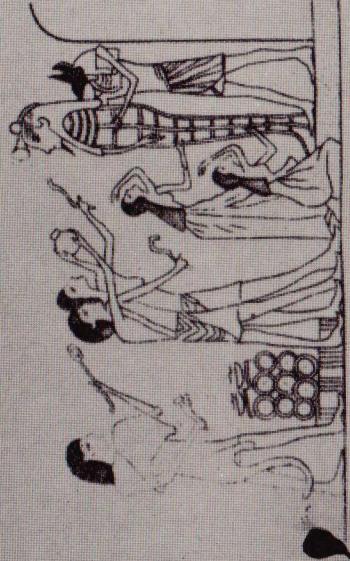
Father's asthma has been troubling him greatly. It has brought on insomnia in its train. He was slowly recovering at Dalhousie and we

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.



WITH SYED MAHMUD AND A. M. KHWAJA, 1925.

S. S. Please  
Mr. Johnson 646



Memory of "operating the cutter"

took a little trip in the interior of the hills in the hope that it would do him good. He did in fact get better. We arrived in Chamba yesterday in the afternoon.

In the evening news came of C. R. Das' death the day before<sup>2</sup>. The shock has been very great for him and his asthma has returned and is worse than ever. We rested here today to give him some relief and rest but he is too upset to take advantage of it. We return to Dalhousie tomorrow.

Chamba is a pretty little place on the banks of the Ravi within easy reach of the high mountain passes. There are numerous trips for anyone who is a bit of a mountaineer and can do stiff climbing at high altitudes. I hope that in the future I shall have an opportunity of visiting some of these high valleys.

I shall probably go down from Dalhousie on the 25th. After a couple of days in Lahore I return to Allahabad and then I go to Calcutta.

Yours affly.,  
Jawaharlal

2. 16 June 1925.

**15. To Maharani Chinkoo Scindia<sup>1</sup>**

2.8.25

Your Highness,

I received your kind letter on my return to Allahabad from Calcutta. I must confess that I find it difficult to acknowledge it and to express my thanks for your exceeding courtesy. Your Highness has been good enough to convey your appreciation of an act of mine which both as an Indian and a citizen of Allahabad it was my privilege and duty to perform.<sup>2</sup> I availed myself eagerly of an opportunity to pay a humble tribute of respect to the memory of a great Indian who had laboured, and not unsuccessfully, for the well being of our motherland.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Jawaharlal had been present at the ceremony of immersion of the late Scindia's ashes in the Sangam on 13 July 1925.

I am much beholden to your Highness for your great kindness in giving a thought to me in the midst of your sorrow and your affairs of State.

With respectful regards,

I am

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 16. To Padmaja Naidu<sup>1</sup>

In running train,  
B. N. W. Ry  
29.1.26

Dear Bebee,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter came as I was leaving Allahabad. I am sorry I sent you the wrong number of the *Living Age*. I had an idea you wanted to read the story by Sigrid Unset (I hope the spelling is correct). I had little hope, from past experience, of finding the other number. But you are very lucky and I spotted it almost immediately and had it sent off.

I have been to Chapra to see Mahmud and incidentally to do some work of the Spinners' Association and visit Malkhachak, where much of the *khaddar* comes from. I am now on my way to Lucknow. Kamala will be pleased to learn that the saris from Hyderabad are coming.

I am certainly looking forward to the visit to Europe but I am full of apprehension. It is quite likely that when I get there I shall be looking backward to India! It is good to have a change and a holiday but this should rest on the solid foundation of something accomplished. The idea of going away just at present with your mother as President of the Congress and Gandhiji toiling away as ever is not particularly gratifying. On the whole perhaps it is as well that I am going but I doubt if I shall be very happy there. India is so like a woman — she attracts and repels.

Yours  
Jawaharlal

This carriage is shaking a great deal. Hence the unsteady hand.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.L.

2. Shrimati Padmaja Naidu; daughter of Sarojini Naidu; Governor of West Bengal 1956—67.

1. To Syed Mohamed<sup>1</sup>

## IN EUROPE

S. S. Pines  
6.3.26

My dear Mohamed,

Your four letters with the postscript reached me in Bombay before sailing. It is difficult for me to reply to them. You know, or ought to know, how deeply I value your friendship. But my whole training has been against display of emotions and soppy exhibitions.

I had no idea that you wanted to come with me to Bombay. If I had known this I would certainly have discussed the question with you. I would of course have dissuaded you for there was absolutely no point in your going to Bombay. It would have been a waste of time and money. My mother surely has a great deal of affection for me, but she did not suggest accompanying me to Bombay. My father went but simply because he had to go to Sabarmati. He was only in Bombay a few hours and did not stay till our departure. And then where would you have gone? I went to Sabarmati and not Bombay and after two days' stay there went on to Bombay. So it was best that you did not accompany us to Bombay.

We reach Aden this evening. We have had a good run so far. Kamala has been fairly well but since yesterday she has had a troublesome cough. I had a radio message from father informing me that Asuri was also coming soon.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

In March 1926 Jawaharlal, accompanied by his wife and daughter, sailed for Europe, as a stay in Switzerland was expected to improve his wife's health. He and his family were away for nearly two years, returning to India in December 1927.

1. Syed Mohamed Pines, 1926



1. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry to say I can't write this letter in full in English. My French is very weak. I am trying however to improve it a little.  
I trust you are well.  
With regards,

S. S. Pilsna  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
6.3.26

My dear Mahmud,

Your four letters with the postscript reached me in Bombay before sailing. It is difficult for me to reply to them. You know, or ought to know, how deeply I value your friendship. But my whole training has been against display of emotions and soppy exhibitions.

I had no idea that you wanted to come with me to Bombay. If I had known this I would certainly have discussed the question with you. I would of course have dissuaded you for there was absolutely no point in your going to Bombay. It would have been a waste of time and money. My mother surely has a great deal of affection for me, but she did not suggest accompanying me to Bombay. My father went but simply because he had to go to Sabarmati. He was only in Bombay a few hours and did not stay till our departure. And then where would you have gone? I went to Sabarmati and not Bombay and after two days' stay there went on to Bombay. So it was best that you did not accompany us to Bombay.

We reach Aden this evening. We have had a good run so far. Kamala has been fairly well but since yesterday she has had a troublesome cough. I had a radio message from father informing me that Ansari was also coming soon.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

2. To Padmaja Naidu<sup>1</sup>

14.3.26

S. S. Pilson,  
off Ionian Isles  
14.3.26

A ceremony not needed by our politicians. No inducement needed by them!

We have had a rough passage through the Mediterranean & Kamala & Sarup are fed up with the sea. Their problem is how are they ever to get back to India with a few thousand miles of sea in between! We reach Brindisi tomorrow & Venice the day after.

Jawahar

I. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

See illustration, "Ceremony of opening the mouth."

3. To Romain Rolland<sup>1</sup>

Hotel Roseraie

Chemin de la Roseraie 25

Geneve

8 May 1926

Respected Monsieur Rolland,<sup>2</sup>

I have pleasure in enclosing a letter for you from Mr. Gandhi<sup>3</sup>. I am looking forward greatly to meeting you and hope I shall have the opportunity before long. I shall probably have to stay for some months in Geneva owing to my wife's treatment here.

1. Romain Rolland Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (1866-1944); French novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1915; was a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi and wrote his biography.

3. Introducing Jawaharlal as "one of my dearest co-workers and friends."

I am sorry to have to write this letter in English. I am afraid my French is very weak. I am trying however to improve it a little.

I trust you are well.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Romain Rolland<sup>1</sup>

Chemin de la Roseraie 25

Geneve

13 Mai 1926

Cher Monsieur Rolland,

Je vous bien remercie pour votre lettre et pour votre invitation. Madame Nehru regrette beaucoup qu'elle ne peut pas partir de Geneve parce que son docteur ne le permet pas encore. Elle espere, cependant, qu'elle pourra vous visiter et presenter ses respects a madame votre soeur apres quelques semaines. Mais j'aurai tres heureux de vous visiter la semaine prochaine. Je me propose d'aller a la villa Olga le jeudi 20 mai par le chemin de fer, et j'espere que j'arriverai a la villa vers les deux heures et demie.

Vous avez raison, c'est ma petite fille, Indira, qui est a l' Ecole Internationale ici. Je suis bien content d' apprendre que son professeur, Mademoiselle Hartoch, est une de vos amies. Indira, peut-etre, m'accompagnera jeudi a la villa Olga. Jeudi est un jour de conge dans son ecole.

J'ai ose de vous ecrire en francais mais j'ai peur qu'il ya beaucoup d'erreurs dans cette lettrc. J'espere que vous les pardonnerez.

Veuillez agreer, Monsieur, l' expression de mes meilleurs compliments,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

TRANSLATION

Geneva

13 May 1926

Dear Mr. Rolland,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you very much for your letter and invitation. My wife greatly regrets that her doctor will not allow her to go out of Geneva, but she hopes a few weeks later to call on you and your sister. However, I shall be delighted to see you next week. I plan to go to the Villa Olga by train on Thursday the 20th May, and I hope to reach your house at about 2.30.

You are right, it is my little daughter, Indira, who studies at the International School here. I am glad to hear that her teacher, Miss Hartoch, is a friend of yours. Indira may come along with me to your house, as she has no school on Thursdays.

I have ventured to write to you in French though I am afraid there are many mistakes in the letter. I apologise for these.

With best wishes,

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. "I had the privilege of meeting Romain Rolland on several occasions at Villeneuve thirty years ago. I was greatly impressed by him and, though he was so different from Gandhi, I sensed a certain communion of spirit between the two. These two men with different background of experiences met on a higher level and recognised each other."—Jawaharlal's foreword dated 1 June 1957 to *Cahiers Romain Rolland*, Vol. 9.

5. **To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>**

C/o Thos. Cook & Son,

Geneva

24.5.26

My dear Mahmud,

Thanks for your letters. I have been leading a fairly quiet life here since I wrote to you and have nothing wonderful to record. I hope

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

however to resume an active life now and to move about a little and also take a little part in the activities of Geneva. For Geneva is developing into a big international centre and there is always something going on here. The International Labour Conference<sup>2</sup> will begin day after tomorrow and after that there will be numerous conferences and meetings. In July & August there is a regular course on International Politics here and I might perhaps attend it. Meanwhile I propose to go to Paris next week and to Italy next month for a week or two. My sister Krishna will be landing at Brindisi about the middle of next month and I shall go to meet her.

I am afraid your knowledge of geography is a bit weak. Else you would not have asked me questions about Lausanne. Lausanne is very near Geneva and I had always intended going there. One of the persons on whom I relied most for advice — a Turk<sup>3</sup> whom Ansari introduced to me — lives at Lausanne.

There are not, so far as I am aware, many Turks in Switzerland. I have met two or three and they are cultured and enlightened persons. They have certainly given up religion as it is understood in India at present. But one of them, about whom I think I wrote to you, is one of the most essentially religious men it has been my good fortune to come across. It is a wonder to them why Hindus & Moslems quarrel over petty matters of so-called religion. I believe the Turkish royal exiles are somewhere in the south of France. I do not know anything about them.

News from India is most distressing. I do not attach very much importance to political squabbles but the communal frenzy is awful to contemplate. We seem to have been caught in a whirlpool of mutual hatred and we go round and round and down and down into the abyss. Rioting appears to have become a permanent feature of Calcutta life. I have read in the Indian papers the proceedings of the Khilafat Committee<sup>4</sup> & Mohamad Ali's interview.<sup>5</sup> I was grieved to read them.

2. This was the eighth session of the Conference.

3. Essad Foad Bey.

4. At the special session of the Khilafat Conference, held at Delhi in May 1926, provocative speeches were made condemning the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha for their Sangathan activities and appealing to the Muslims to organise themselves and thus safeguard their interests.

5. On his way to Hedjaz, at a press interview Mohamad Ali warned the Hindu Mahasabha that the rioting in Calcutta might be the precursor of a bloodier struggle, and asked the Muslims to organise themselves for such a struggle.

For months or even a year or more we have thought that the situation was so bad that it could not become worse and must improve. But it does go worse and heaven knows where it will end. Ansari and Abdur Rahman<sup>6</sup> were here last week and they were dejected and dispirited at the turn events had taken. They left by the last mail boat for India.

I met the other day Moulvi Barkatulla<sup>7</sup> here. He is having some book printed in Berlin and he tells me that his publishers have got a stock of 1,000 copies of the *Diwan-i-Ghalib*<sup>8</sup> which they printed some time ago for some one in India. I think this must be the same edition, a copy of which you gave me. The publishers want to dispose of the edition at one mark a copy. I told Barkatulla that you might want to take it.

It would probably cost 12 or 13 annas per copy landed in India. If there is a ready sale for the book it might be worthwhile to take the stock. If you are interested in the proposition you might communicate direct with Barkatulla. He should be addressed as follows :

Professor M. B. Maulavie

10 Ilgen Strasse

St Gallen (Switzerland)

You had better write to him in Urdu as he feels more at home in that language. Before deciding about purchasing the books you should send for sample copies so that there might be no mistake.

6. Dr. Abdulla Abdur Rahman (1873-1940); of Malayan parentage, was leader of the South African Indian delegation which visited India in 1925 to plead the cause of Indians in South Africa. It met the Viceroy and attended the Kanpur session of the Congress.

7. One of the most active of Indian nationalists working outside India. He went to Japan and the United States and in 1915 joined the Indo-German-Turkish mission at Istanbul. He reached Kabul with the mission and formed an Azad Government in Afghanistan. When the Afghan Government withdrew their support the mission left Afghanistan and Barkatulla went to Germany. After the war he organised propaganda for the Indian nationalist cause in various countries of Europe. He died in exile in Germany in 1928.

8. Asadulla Khan Ghalib's collection of Urdu poems was first published in 1863 by Munshi Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow. Ghalib wrote originally in Persian but later evolved a matchless style in Urdu which became famous for its simplicity and subtlety. The lyric quality and philosophic content of his poems and the elegance of his prose won him recognition as the greatest writer in the Urdu language. Ghalib lived in Delhi on the verge of poverty throughout his life. The centenary of his death in 1969 was observed not only throughout India but in many countries of Asia.

This German edition of Ghalib, referred to by Jawaharlal, was printed by Dr. Zakir Husain.

Barkatulla also said that he could arrange with his publishers to get other similar books printed.

Kamala is making progress. Nothing sudden can be expected in her case but if the slow progress is maintained, as I have every hope that it will, she will be quite fit in a few months. Indu goes to school here and enjoys it.

I hope your wife is well now.

Love,

Yours affly.,

Jawahar

## 6. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

46 Boulevard des Tranchées

Geneva

15.7.26

My dear Mahmud,

I am afraid even today I cannot write to you a long letter. I have been very much pressed for time lately and have had to deal with a voluminous correspondence. Many engagements are cropping up and now that I am living in a flat there are household affairs to be attended to.

I am very sorry to learn of the serious illness of your wife.<sup>2</sup> She has been under treatment in Delhi for some months now and I was hoping that she was getting better. But from your letters it appears that she is by no means improving. I do hope that by the time this reaches you she will be on the high road to recovery.

The success of your efforts in Behar to patch up Hindu-Muslim differences is gratifying. I am however more and more inclined to think that the only remedy is to scotch our so-called religion and secularise our intelligentsia at least. How long that will take I cannot say but religion in India will kill that country and its peoples if it is not subdued.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Begum Rafiq-ul-Fatima (b. 1909).

Kamala is more or less the same. She is gaining in weight. Her temperature has not improved but I hope that this too will be better soon. Indu is well. Her school is closed and I am thinking of sending her to the mountains here for a change.

I enclose some postcards for your children. Give these to them with my love.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

#### 7. To the Editor, *Journal De Geneve*<sup>1</sup>

Professor M. B. Nanavati

10 Ilgen Straße

Dear Sir,—During my short residence in Geneva I have read with pleasure many of the able and well informed leading articles appearing in the *Journal de Geneve*. My surprise and regret was thus all the greater to read, as I was leaving Geneva for the week-end, the article headed *Les troubles de l'Inde*, which appeared in the Journal of the 31st July. I would not of course presume to question your right to express your opinion on the problems of India. But I do think that we can expect from a responsible newspaper of the standing of the Journal opinions which are based on facts and some knowledge of the various factors which have together produced the present political and economic situation in India.

It is not possible for me within the limits of a letter to you to deal with the various problems which confront India, and indeed I would not like to trespass too much on your courtesy. May I however indicate the various lines of enquiry which might lead to a truer understanding of these problems and of the Indian situation today? It is not necessary for me to point out to you that a study of the present condition of any country divorced from a knowledge of the past and of the underlying causes which have produced the results we now notice cannot be of any great value. In the case of India the references frequently made

1. The letter, dated 3 August 1926, was published in the issue of 28 October 1926.

to her past history would be more helpful if they were based on a study of her history. In your article you have yourself referred to bloody combats between Hindus and Musalmans taking place for centuries past in the towns and countryside of India, to the very recent, superficial and imported idea of nationality, and to periodic famines in the past. These statements, partly true, would however convey an entirely erroneous idea of Indian history, and any standard history of India whether written by an Indian or an Englishman would go a long way to correct this wrong idea. For India has through the ages been an extraordinarily prosperous country and indeed her past wealth and riches were famous enough to attract adventurers from all parts of the world; and in spite of wars and invasions she has had less of violence than most of the countries of Europe and has enjoyed, both during Hindu and Muslim rule, long periods of peaceful and efficient government when her literature, arts and industries flourished and a high degree of culture existed. Indeed even during many of her past wars the countryside was little affected. The modern idea of political nationality is of recent growth even in the West and India certainly has not had it for long, but her history and literature and even religious tradition teach us of the unity of India from the earliest times and of the existence, though not in an aggressive form, of an essentially national mentality.

To consider the record of British rule in India it is necessary to see what the condition of the country was prior to the occupation by the British, in what respects it has developed or deteriorated during the succeeding century and a half, and what it is now. It is interesting and instructive to compare the changes brought about in other nations during the same period. The most vital question is whether the wealth of India has increased or lessened. It is notorious that India is terribly poor today and even the Government of India's official statement to Parliament reads as follows :

"The famine which actually occurs is only an aspect of a permanent scarcity. Or, in other words, the complete failure of the harvest in certain parts of India to such an extent that it should be obvious to everybody is only a repetition of what occurs almost every year; and the problem of saving a section of the population from misery or semi-starvation in a large part of India occurs afresh every year."

This is the official statement after one hundred and fifty years of British rule. I do not wish to state here what the Indian viewpoint

is but I shall only quote one Englishman, Mr. Shore<sup>2</sup> of the Bengal Civil Service, who stated as long ago as 1837 that "the grinding extortion of the British Government has effected the impoverishment of the country and the people to an unparalleled extent." To understand how this terrible impoverishment has taken place it is necessary to know, apart from the admittedly predatory period of British rule, something of the land policy and of the trade and economic policy, and of how Indian industries were crushed out of existence for the benefit of British manufacturers. The recent currency policy which has caused great losses to the Indian Government and to innumerable private individuals is also a pertinent enquiry, and the fact that all the Indian Chambers of Commerce and manufacturers and merchants unconnected with politics are and have been very discontented with these policies and resent what they consider is a preference shown to British trade, is not without significance. More important still has been the attitude of the Government towards the nation-building departments such as education, sanitation, medical relief, etc. After a very long period of British rule India has less than 10% literates although the progress made in other countries during this same period has been prodigious. Attempts on behalf of the Indians to increase the rate of progress have been opposed by Government on the ground of lack of funds, most of the funds being spent on an exceedingly expensive British army of occupation and on a top-heavy Civil Service. The army policy indeed, and the way Indians have been kept disarmed and denied suitable opportunities of training for defence, is a distinct and profitable field of enquiry.

With regard to the Indian States you might be interested to know that some are ahead of the British Government in many respects. But undoubtedly most of them are in a backward and deplorable state. How they have continued to be so is worth enquiry, for it is stated that their incompetent and undesirable rulers can only remain in their places because the British Government supports its puppets, and the unhappy residents of these territories have to face not only their ruler but the real power of the British Government which is behind him.

Indians have no desire to ignore or minimise the Hindu-Muslim question. It affects them too vitally. Whatever the intentions of the British in regard to it may be — and you yourself say that they can hardly welcome unity — it is very pertinent to enquire what their actions and

2. Frederick John Shore (d. 1837); arriving in India in 1818 to serve the East India Company, he became Civil & Sessions judge and later Commissioner, Sagar and Narmada territories.

policy are leading up to. For undoubtedly these troubles have increased during the past few years and merely to say that the Reform Scheme has led to this is a grave misunderstanding of the causes. These causes are real and can be effectively dealt with but recent history shows how a third party can easily aggravate the trouble and increase the friction. The Irish analogy where rival religious factions struggled against each other so long as a third party was controlling the situation but gradually settled down to peaceful cooperation when they were left to themselves is instructive although it may not be wholly applicable.

Regarding the over-population of India it is interesting to note that the mean density of population in British India is 226 per sq. mile. For some other countries the density is as follows:

Belgium	654
England	649
Netherlands	544
Germany	332
Japan	215
Austria	199
France	184

I do not know what special or general information has induced you to make the remarkable statement that Indians "almost unanimously" desire the domination of Britain. I am not aware of any responsible person or authority, Indian or English, official or non-official, who has said so. I would refer you to the Government of India's last annual report for the official viewpoint which, far from being the Indian point of view, is equally far from your assertion. As for the still more remarkable assertion you make that Indians, inspite of their protestations and their nationalism, really want this domination to continue, I can only conclude that you consider that the Indians who declare that they want freedom for their country are liars and hypocrites. There can be no room for argument if you hold this opinion. Indeed being myself one of this tribe I would also naturally fall into the category of the liars and hypocrites. Under these circumstances, I would not have troubled you with this letter, but on full consideration, I feel that I owe it to you to place the above considerations before you. For a considerable time, and till recently, I was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and am not unacquainted with happenings in India.

As I have stated above I do not know what criteria you have to find out the unanimous will of the Indian people. Perhaps you are unaware

or the fact that every responsible political organisation in India, moderate or extremist, Hindu or Muslim or Sikh, has demanded freedom for India. You may also not know that a considerable number of persons have suffered rather heavily for their activities in the cause of Indian freedom, that from December 1921 to March 1922 about 25,000 Indians were sent to jail; that political trials continue in that unhappy country; that special repressive laws are in force to arrest and detain people without trial or even the framing of a charge and that many persons are detained under them. It is remarkable that so much repression and punishment should be necessary for a people well contented with British rule, and still more remarkable that people should lie and be hypocritical merely to suffer in this way.

I apologise for the length of this letter and trust that you will extend to it the courtesy of your columns.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3.8.26

**8. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>**

Geneva  
11.8.26

My dear Mahmud,

I am afraid I am a bit irregular in writing to you. Partly this is due to disinclination to writing merely disjointed notes, records of bare facts and nothing more, and partly to many pre-occupations. I dislike writing a letter which is like a cutting from a daily paper. But really I have managed to fill in my time fairly well during the last month. Geneva is full of all kinds of special courses and lectures and I am

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

attending a number of these lectures. On the whole they are interesting and as the lecturers belong to most of the different European nationalities, their varying viewpoints are instructive. But the result of spending all this time in lectures, which are usually in English, is disastrous from the point of view of my French. Far from becoming a Frenchman, as you seem to imagine, I have made little progress with the language. And this is not surprising considering the little time that I have given to it.

I was very glad to learn that Ansari had resigned<sup>2</sup> from the Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League. I can see no way out of our difficulties except by proceeding on more or less secular lines in politics. The outlook in India is dark enough but somehow I do not feel as pessimistic as the news would warrant. Do not get down-hearted. We shall still see Swaraj. Whatever India might or might not do, I am fairly sure that England cannot hold on to India for long.

Kamala is doing well. So is Indu who is in the mountains. As for me I am flourishing like the proverbial green bay tree! You will be interested to learn that I have lost about 5 or 6 pounds in weight and am about 4 or 5 inches less in the waist. This is good work.

Love,

Yours affly.,

Jawahar

2. In a speech at Delhi on 11 July 1926 Dr. Ansari declared that from that day he had ceased to be a member of the Muslim League, Khilafat Committee or any other communal organisation, and for him Congress alone was the body to which he owed allegiance and his religion was Swarajya.

#### 9. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Geneva  
12.9.26

My dear Mahmud,  
The last mail brought two short letters from you. This has happened several times before. I suppose the Chapra post office is not very up to date or perhaps you post your letters too late occasionally.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.L.

I was pleased to learn of the formation of the National Party<sup>2</sup> or Union — whatever it is called and I am very glad to learn from your letter that it is making good progress. It is decidedly a move in the right direction but of course much need not be expected of it. There is certainly some danger in getting a mixed and varied lot in it but you cannot help that and the other danger of its shrivelling up with a very limited membership is even worse. I would therefore welcome a large membership and pay little attention to undesirables coming in. You cannot stop them. At the same time I am not much in favour of personal canvassing for members. Appeals should be made through all newspapers, leaflets etc. and the greatest publicity should be given, but personal canvassing in India specially means dragging in people who do not really want to join and they are more of a hindrance than a help.

A large organisation including all manner of people must necessarily frame a moderate programme agreeable to all the groups in it. The larger the organisation the more moderate it is likely to be. It thus becomes necessary at times to have a smaller, better knitted group with a more advanced outlook. The time for that will come soon. For the present it is well that the large organisation is developing.

I think what is required in India most is a course of study of Bertrand Russell's books, or at any rate some of them. No country or people who are slaves to dogma and the dogmatic mentality can progress, and unhappily our country and people have become extraordinarily dogmatic and little-minded. Generosity of heart is a good thing but what is wanted is not an emotional outburst of generosity but coldly reasoned tolerance. Religion as practised in India has become the old man of the sea for us and it has not only broken our backs but stifled and almost killed all originality of thought and mind. Like Sindbad the Sailor we must get rid of this terrible burden before we can aspire to breathe freely or do anything useful.

The mention of Bertrand Russell reminds me of a new book of his — *On Education* — which I have been reading recently. I would strongly recommend it to you. It has innumerable lessons for us, for our women-folk and for our children. We complain of our country and of its people, and rightly, but after all they depend largely on our ideals of education. It is amazing how utterly wrongly we bring up our children — physically, mentally and morally — and as for our treatment

2. The Responsivists and Independents met in a conference in Bombay on 3 April 1926 and announced the formation of the National Party to prepare the country 'for the establishment of Swaraj of the Dominion type'.

of women the less said the better. Is it any wonder that we have continually to contend against bodily ailments and mental troubles? Do you know of a single family of your acquaintance in India which is not always faced with disease? More than half our energy is spent in trying to lessen disease in the members of our family and in ourselves and yet a proper system of education of body and mind should make disease a very rare occurrence. We are always hobnobbing with doctors and *hakims* but it does not strike us that the way to combat disease is to combat it at the root and remove the causes. These causes are largely interwoven with our unfortunate social system and customs. I cannot conceive any woman to be healthy, physically or mentally, who has been confined behind the *purdah*. And I cannot conceive her children to be healthy or properly brought up, for the most important years of a child's education are the years from birth to about 10, when it is very largely under the influence of its mother.

Kamala, I am sorry to say, has not been keeping very well. There has not been any marked change but still there was a slight setback in August. She is again picking up now. Her temperature is due to the fact that the disease is present still. Krishna and Indu are well.

I am going to London day after tomorrow — after over 14 years of absence.

Love, Yours affly,  
Jawahar

Could you kindly send my wife some books of Iqbal and the poems of Hasrat Mohani? Also a small Urdu dictionary?

Jawahar

Could you kindly send my wife some books of Iqbal and the poems of Hasrat Mohani? Also a small Urdu dictionary?

Jawahar

Will go to London on the 21st October. Indu will go off to Cheltenham on three days before that date.

10. To Father<sup>1</sup>

Geneva  
6.10.26

My dear Father,

This letter will reach you on the eve of the elections and you must be terribly busy. The caricature which you sent with your last letter shows the kind of things you must have to put up with. It must be a trial. I suppose it will take some time before the Indian public and electorate, not to mention the innumerable "leaders", get over personalities and fight over principles. Anyway I hope that the end of the election, whatever its result, will bring you some rest and relief. I must confess to a feeling of satisfaction at not being in India just at present. Indeed the whole future outlook is so gloomy that, from the political viewpoint, a return to India is far from agreeable.

Nan and Ranjit came here some days ago. Ranjit stayed for nearly three days and then left for Berlin. Nan remained behind. Ranjit returns here and then they both go to Trieste and sail on the 15th September. So that within ten or at most twelve days of your receiving this letter you will probably see them. If you happen to be in Bombay when they land, and Nan tells me this is possible, then you might see them sooner. They will probably reach Bombay on the 31st or thereabouts. Their boat is the Lloyd Triestino "Asia".

Kamala is more or less the same, that is, she looks well but continues to have a slight temperature — 99.5°. Her weight is satisfactory. It is quite clear now however that no further good can be expected from our prolonging our stay in Geneva. I have been told definitely that she cannot stand Spahlinger's<sup>2</sup> vaccine injections. I should have said as much judging from past results. Whenever she has taken the vaccine she has gradually got worse. Nobody seems to know exactly why this should be so, or at any rate I have received no satisfactory explanation. Whatever other ailments she may be suffering from they are certainly not upto much. She is certainly weak constitutionally but I presume that many sufferers from T.B. are in the same position. I have been

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Henry Spahlinger (1882-1965); Swiss bacteriologist who patented a serum treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis.

told not only that she cannot stand the vaccine now but that she is not likely to be able to do so in the future. Thus the vaccine treatment is more or less ruled out even according to Spahlinger and his advisers. And vaccine being an essential and all-important part of Spahlinger's treatment it follows that Spahlinger's treatment is practically ruled out. The serum, which appears to do her good, may continue to be given to her, but I have been repeatedly told that the serum by itself does not carry one very far. At the most it just cures the disease for the time being but there is every chance of the patient getting it again.

All this points to the inevitable conclusion that the Spahlinger treatment is not the panacea which some people make it to be. There may be, and I think there is, a great deal of merit in it. But just like other remedies it suits some people and not others. I am not competent to judge of the real merit and importance of the treatment. Many people who have tried it speak highly of it. But in Kamala's case it has not been a success and I am certainly justified in saying that there is a great deal of tall talk about the efficacy of the treatment. The undoubtedly benefit which Kamala has derived during the last five months here might easily be accounted for by the change of climate, diet etc.

Under the circumstances the only thing to be done is to go to the mountains. Spahlinger himself suggested this. The only question is where we should go. There is not very much to choose between the various well-known health resorts and sanatoria. On the whole, if there were no other considerations, I would have preferred Davos and next to it Leysin. But this not only meant a complete break with the Spahlinger treatment but probably a deliberate attempt on the part of the new doctors to do something very different to show their displeasure of Spahlinger & his works. I have therefore decided to go to Montana where Stephani<sup>3</sup> has his sanatorium. Stephani has been seeing Kamala off and on for the last three months or more and knows something about her case. Spahlinger's serum can also be continued there if necessary. I would personally like to go on from Montana to some other place after a while. But this can be considered later.

So the net result of the past five months' treatment is disappointing. It is difficult to say if she would have been better off elsewhere, but we certainly had been led to believe that she would be cured here within six months. From my personal point of view a stay in Geneva was more interesting and profitable than elsewhere in Switzerland, but that is poor consolation. We go to Montana on the 21st October. Indu will go off to Chesières two or three days before that date.

3. Dr. Jacques Stephani, a Swiss lung specialist now resident in Geneva.

I am ashamed at not having sent you any good photographs of any of us in spite of your repeated reminders. For months I have been thinking of facing the camera but something or other intervened. Kamala was not as fit as I would have liked her to be or Indu was away. At last however the prospect of leaving Geneva has moved me to action and we are going to the photographer tomorrow.

I have written fully to Ansari about Kamala.

Love,

from your loving son,  
Jawahar

### 11. To Father<sup>1</sup>

Geneva  
13.10.26

My dear Father,

You will forgive me I hope for a rather short note this week. I have been going about with Nan & Ranjit on little excursions and visits and my last few days have been largely taken up by them. Today we have returned after going to Lausanne and to Villeneuve to see Romain Rolland.

Tomorrow Ranjit & Nan leave for Trieste. Probably they will meet you soon after you receive this letter and they will give you all news first hand. It has been pleasant to have them here and we shall feel a little lonely after their departure.

Kamala has been keeping quite well. She has not looked better since she came here. Her temperature has been practically normal and her weight has gone up another half kilo — making 4 kilos in all since she came to Europe, that is 9 lbs. She is continuing the serum injections.

We saw the proofs of our photographs yesterday but I am afraid they will not be ready for despatch for another 10 days or more. Indu's photographs have come out very well and the others are not bad.

Early next week I shall take Indu to Villars and a few days later the rest of us will move to Montana.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

My efforts to get expert opinions on the Lakhna finger prints<sup>2</sup> in Paris have failed. There appear to be no private experts and the police department which deals with finger prints would not agree even to give an opinion in a private matter in spite of every persuasion. In England there is the same difficulty to which one has to add an additional difficulty. The chief men of Scotland Yard have already given a definite opinion regarding the prints. I do not quite see who to approach in the matter now.

Love,

Your loving son,  
Jawahar

2. In this protracted case of succession to an estate, doctors in London certified that a woman had given birth to a child and, as proof of the woman's identity, attached her photograph and thumb impressions. On receipt of this certificate the Privy Council referred the case back to the Allahabad High Court. But it was alleged that there had been impersonation and Motilal Nehru had the matter thoroughly examined. In this connection he wanted Jawaharlal to engage the services of finger-print experts in Paris or London.

## 12. The English General Strike and Three Lessons for Volunteers<sup>1</sup>

The General Strike in England took place some time ago, but as my friend Dr. Hardikar has asked me to write something for *The Volunteer* I feel that I cannot do better than draw the attention of my brother members of the Hindustani Seva Dal to some of its striking lessons. We are not concerned with the merits of the coal dispute in England. Those of us who have tried to understand the situation and have studied the question will probably have arrived at some conclusions and may sympathise with one or other of the two protagonists. But the lessons which the great strike has to teach us are independent of the dispute and it is immaterial whether the miners or the mine-owners are right or whether the Government in England handled the situation rightly or otherwise.

We must understand however the magnitude of the struggle. I have

1. *The Volunteer*, October 1926, pp. 225—227.

no correct figures with me but it may be said roughly that about four millions or forty lakhs of workers ceased working. If the families of these workers are included we might put the figure moderately at 12 to 15 millions. This means that about a quarter of the population of Great Britain actually struck or actively sympathised with the strikers. On the other side there were the capitalists and owners with their far greater financial resources backed up by the whole power of the State. It was thus far and away the greatest industrial struggle between capital and labour which the world has yet seen. But it was something more. The very nature of the struggle and the use of direct action on such a large scale makes it something more than an industrial struggle, however much the leaders of labour might have wished to keep its scope limited. The General Strike meant the adoption of tactics and methods other than parliamentary and its success must inevitably have tended towards the gradual downfall of the parliamentary system of government.

The struggle thus was a very vital one and fraught with the greatest consequences. It might have resulted in as great a revolution as any that English history has to show. And yet how was it fought?

It was to the interest of the Government to preserve the *status quo* and to maintain order. But the other party — the workers — were in reality even more desirous of remaining orderly and peaceful. And throughout the strike no effort was spared by the leaders of labour to keep perfect peace and avoid all acts of violence and disorder. They preached nonviolence to their followers for they realised that every act of violence would react on themselves and not only alienate the goodwill of many people who sympathised with them but would strengthen the hands of Government. They realised further that acts of violence in the ranks would introduce indiscipline and break up their solidarity. For violence and nonviolence cannot exist together. Both are naturally exclusive and both in order to be effective require the strictest discipline. If violence is the method adopted to enforce a demand it must take the form of a highly disciplined army with all the latest weapons of attack and destruction in order to challenge effectively the organised violence of the other party. Any other kind of violence in which any of these necessary ingredients are wanting — where there is no discipline or organisation of sufficient numbers and no weapons of the most improved variety — must inevitably end in a fiasco. Where effective violence is not possible — and it would appear that it is no longer possible anywhere against an organised State unless the armies of the State itself mutiny — the only other effective weapon that remains is organised and disciplined nonviolent action. The labour leaders realised this and tried their utmost to avoid disorder and violence.

Our first lesson thus is one of nonviolence. No one is rash enough to say that wars between different States are things of the past. There are likely to be more wars before the world realises the folly of war. But the method of peaceful direct action is gradually taking the place of war where there is conflict within the boundaries of a State.

Our second lesson is one of discipline. Without this, it is becoming even more obvious now than it was before, every organised action is utterly futile. And in the labour struggle in England one cannot help admiring the wonderful discipline shown on both sides. The workers displayed an amazing solidarity by obeying without hesitation, and with hardly any dissenters, the mandate of their leaders. They showed discipline in the manner of leaving work, for care was taken to leave the mines etc. in proper condition and where necessary with a supply of safety men who would keep the mines from deteriorating. Their behaviour during the period of the strike was also commendable. On the other side, the rush of volunteers to help Government and their willing submission to the discipline and hardships of new and uncongenial duties, were admirable.

There is a third and equally important lesson for us and that is we must keep our heads and our good humour and optimism even through our darkest trials. The English people came out well from the General Strike and received the praises of other countries chiefly because of their light-hearted — but not wanting in determination — manner of treating it and the new problems it had created. This very spirit of buoyancy halved their present troubles and paved the way for a happier understanding in the future.

I wish that these three lessons were taken to heart by the Hindustani Seva Dal and those others who have not yet so far joined the Dal. In the welter of communal troubles and political arguments, the Dal stands for something essential, something to which every thinking citizen must needs respond. It stands for discipline and efficiency and peaceful action, and may I add, good humour and optimism. And with sufficient support and encouragement the Dal could grow up into a body, well-organised and disciplined and effective enough not only to curb the fanatical outbursts of communal frenzy, which disgrace our country today, but hasten the advent of Swaraj.

13. To Father<sup>1</sup>

16-11-1926

In Berlin, apart from meeting many people, old friends and new, I had the opportunity of visiting some big factories I had not specially intended visiting there; but I happened to get into touch with a new firm called the Indo-Germania which has been formed to encourage German trade with India. There is an Indian director but the important man at the head of it is an influential German. It was through him that I got into touch with various big German firms. I visited the A.E.G. and Simon's factories which are two of the largest and best equipped electrical factories; also the N.A.G., a big motor factory specialising in lorries and good class cars. The visits were very interesting and I was treated with great courtesy everywhere by the directors or other officials. I saw also the Ufa film making ateliers. I wanted to see very much a big aeroplane factory but I had no time for it.

For various reasons the Germans are well disposed to Indians at present and there are great facilities for industrial training which England neither has the capacity nor the good will to offer. Austria also is an attractive country for such training, in addition to being a cheap place to live in. I wish more Indian students could take advantage of these opportunities. In Austria I am told a student can on his return start a profitable undertaking with comparatively little capital — say Rs. 15,000. Kamala's brother Kailas<sup>2</sup> would do well if he went to Vienna instead of continuing his scientific studies in Lucknow. If you happen to come across any suitable youths I hope you will suggest to them the advisability of coming over.

I should particularly like Indians taking a course in aeroplane flying and construction. This can easily be arranged in Germany but of course they must come with some engineering knowledge. There is already an Indian who has fully qualified himself and is at present working as a responsible official of a large German aeroplane firm.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 92/1926-27, pp. 89—93, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. Kailash Nath Kaul (b. 1905); brother of Kamala Nehru; Director of the National Botanical Gardens, Lucknow, for many years.

I wonder if you have heard of the League against Oppression in the Colonies and of the Congress they propose holding in Brussels on the 20th January and following days. This league is attempting to gather in one fold all organizations interested in combating imperialism in every shape. It has succeeded in getting great deal of support from nearly 400 organisations all over the world, including two governments — those of Mexico and Canton in China. Mexico comes in because of its fear of the U.S.A. Invitations have been sent to the Congress in India and to various other bodies. The Trade Union Congress of India has promised to send representatives, so also the South African Indian Congress. Andrews perhaps is coming on behalf of one of these bodies. The Congress at Brussels is likely to be a very representative one and it would be highly desirable to have some representatives of the Indian National Congress, for after all the most menacing imperialism of the day is the British imperialism in India. The date fixed for the beginning of this Brussels meeting is 20th January. This is awkward and it will probably be difficult to get our representatives over by then. But still I hope an attempt will be made. Apart from every other consideration, it will give us a chance to meet people from all quarters of the world. From China alone over 20 organizations are sending representatives. If you decide to send representatives it will be desirable to have one person among them who is an economist and knows something about British imperialist policy in regard to military matters in India as this is an important subject which is bound to interest the Brussels Congress. It is for the A.I.C.C. to decide whom to send, but just as a suggestion I might name Sarojini Naidu, Shuaib and A. T. Gidwani. Shuaib I have included as a Mohamadan would be very desirable and he strikes me as the most suitable. If you like my name might be added on but I should not like to be the one and only representative. In any event I should like to go to Brussels as a visitor just to meet people.

I shall write to you more on this subject next week. Meanwhile I hope you will give the matter some thought. It is worthy of it.

**14. To Father<sup>1</sup>**

Montana,  
23.11.26

My dear Father,

I posted a letter to you yesterday morning. On my return however from Chesieres this evening, I found your note written at Burhanpore, C.P., waiting for me. As there is still time to catch the mail I am writing these few lines.

I am not surprised at the view Sprawson<sup>2</sup> has taken about Kamala's treatment. I do not suppose any wonderful change for the better would have taken place if Kamala had gone straight to Davos. At the same time the results so far obtained have been so disappointing that it is just possible that Davos might have done her a little more good. Anyway that is a rather pointless enquiry now.

Nan looked fairly well when she left us here. Perhaps she was tired after the journey when you saw her. In Europe too she had little rest.

I have already written to you about our financial situation. With the help of the balance of the Lakhna money I have with me (£ 50). I can just carry on till about the 15th December. I find that the estimate I sent you some weeks ago of future expenditure slightly erred on the side of being an under-estimate. All manner of petty expenses keep cropping up and together they make a substantial sum. Even a visit to Indu is a costly item. My trip to Germany, although it turned out to be cheaper than I expected, has reduced the money in hand considerably.

Love,

Your loving son,  
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. C. A. Sprawson, member of the Indian Medical Service, who was professor of medicine at Lucknow from 1913 to 1929 and retired in 1937 as Director-General of the Indian Medical Service.

15. To Devadas Gandhi<sup>1</sup>Montana  
1.12.26

My dear Devadas,

I wish the Cow Conference<sup>2</sup> or the Cow Sabha or whatever it is called would send a deputation of the elect to have a look at the cow in this part of the world. It would do them good. And they might get some brighter ideas than keeping enormous *pinjrapoles* for the halt and the lame! I have been greatly interested in the day by day controversy in *Young India*. I wish however that some other animals — including human beings — might be treated likewise.

Love,

Yrs.,  
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 2125.
2. The Cow Conference was held during the Congress week at Belgaum and was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi.

16. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>Montana  
1.12.26

My dear Mahmud,

I have not heard from you for some weeks. But Kamala has been giving me news about your family. I hope your wife is well.

Kamala received a parcel of Urdu books from you a few days ago. She tells me that in it there is a very interesting book about the training of a woman and the early education of a child. She gave me some

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

idea of what the book contains and I wondered how far you agreed with the learned author of the work. Some months ago I suggested to you to read Bertrand Russell's book *On Education*. I do not know if you read it. Whether you read it or not it is a little surprising that you should patronise such absolute trash as the Urdu book I have referred to above. Do you really think there is any sense in it? I was amazed that any man should be foolish enough to write such rot and that others should be sillier to read it. But I am perhaps unfair to the author. I am judging from some extracts only.

Kamala had a little relapse whilst I was away in Berlin but she is doing well now.

I am beginning to feel a bit restive and I wish I could hurl myself into the whirlpool of Indian politics. The suppressed energy of some months wants an outlet. I should have liked to be present at the Gauhati Congress<sup>2</sup>. Not that I think I would have done any good to anybody but I would feel better for a little aggressiveness. And there seem to be so many people about in India whom I should like to go for! From your letters it appears that you are down-hearted and dispirited. Don't be so silly. There is nothing to be down-hearted about. We are passing through an inevitable phase and we shall all be the better for it. So cheer up and give it hot to everybody at Gauhati. And more power to your elbow if you do so.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

2. December 1926.

## 17. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Montana  
12.1.27

My dear Mahmud,  
You complain of my letters being short but surely yours have the virtue of brevity also. I must confess that I do not look forward to the mail day although as a matter of fact I have been keeping up an extensive

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

correspondence. I feel that life is short and there is so much to read and learn that one can spend one's time to better purpose in acquiring knowledge. I have read a fair amount since I came here but it is far less than I wanted to or expected and I am disappointed. Most of us acquire a smattering of the three R's and a little else during our years at school and college and consider that our education is complete and we are learned. In India specially the standard is extraordinarily low and I think most of our difficulties are due to this want of knowledge. Take Lajpat Rai's case as an example. He considers himself, I presume, a highly educated person and a keen political thinker and many others perhaps think likewise. My own opinion about him is that he has no sufficient intellectual or cultural background and is really a very badly educated person. Hence his peculiar behaviour in public life. It is not that we are not intellectual enough. I believe we are better off in this respect than most Europeans but the blight of religion with its handmaids, ignorance and refusal to think, are upon us and the imagined glory of our past, like the old man of the sea, crushes us. Not that our past was not creditable. But to make progress we shall have to throw it away from us and live more in the present and the future.

I have become an even greater believer in *khaddar* than I was but *khaddar* as an economic doctrine and not as an offshoot of religion. I have no patience left with the legitimate and illegitimate offspring of religion.

Kamala has not been keeping well for the last few days. Indu has just gone back to school after spending her Christmas holidays with us.

I am interested to learn about the controversy between Mohamad Ali and Hasan Nizami<sup>2</sup>.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

2. Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1876-1955); a well-known essayist who wrote on many subjects including literature and religion. In later years his popularity waned because of his aggressive manner of propagating Islam. On entering politics he was involved in a press controversy with Maulana Mohamad Ali, who accused him of having divulged some secrets of the Nizam of Hyderabad to the British Government. During the conflict between the Muslim League and Congress in 1945-46 Hasan Nizami aligned himself with the Muslim League. In 1947 he migrated to Hyderabad, where he started a daily newspaper, but returned to Delhi in 1950.

**18. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>**

Stephani,  
Montana s/Siene,  
Switzerland  
19.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,<sup>2</sup>

Many thanks for your letter of the 22nd December and the copy of the letter you sent to Gibarti<sup>3</sup>. I had hoped that some kind of instructions would be sent to me for the Brussels Congress<sup>4</sup> but it appears that I shall have to shift for myself.

I have asked a friend of mine in London, Mr. Tarini Prasad Sinha<sup>5</sup>, whom perhaps you know, to collect some facts and figures for the Brussels Congress and to attend it also. I am unable to do any such preparation work here in Montana owing to want of facilities. Sinha will be of help to me in Brussels. He is connected with the Independent Labour Party<sup>6</sup> in London and is specially in charge of its Indian work. I hope there will be no objection to my paying Sinha his travelling expenses etc. out of the money you are sending me. He cannot afford to come on his own account. The £50 you are sending will be ample for both of us.

I noticed in the *Forward* that a cablegram of greeting had been received by the Congress from the *Berlin Schadows*. I wonder if you and others were also labouring under this misapprehension. The cable was

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-21(79), 1926-27, pp. 77—78. N.M.M.L.
2. A. Rangaswami Iyengar (1877-1934); started as a minor official, then set up legal practice at Tanjore, and finally turned to journalism. He joined *The Hindu*, the leading English newspaper of Madras, but left it to become the editor of the Tamil journal *Swadesamitran*. He was general secretary of the Congress 1926-27. Elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, he was secretary of the Swaraj Party from 1925 and worked closely with Motilal Nehru. He returned to *The Hindu* as editor in 1928 and served it till his death.
3. A Hungarian communist and secretary of the organising committee of the Congress against Imperialism. Jawaharlal met him again, many years later, at the Asian-African Conference at Bandung in April 1955.
4. International Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels in February 1927.
5. An Indian journalist in London, who was working in the office of the Independent Labour Party.
6. The Independent Labour Party was the original Labour Party in Britain, having been founded by Keir Hardie in 1893 seven years before the Labour Party. It was affiliated with the Labour Party till 1932. The I.L.P. was more radical than the Labour Party but opposed to Communism. It never commanded a large following.

sent by Gibarti on behalf of the League against Oppression in the Colonies. "Schadowstr" (short for Schadowstrasse) was the name of the street.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**19. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>**

Sanatorium Stephani,  
Montana — Suisse  
23.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,

I have sent you by this mail three registered packets containing my reports and other papers relating to the Brussels Congress.

I wonder if you could take any effective steps to move the Indian labour leaders over the Chinese question<sup>2</sup>. I wish the trade unions could be made to adopt something similar to our joint declaration at Brussels or the Independent Labour Party resolutions. I am very much out of touch with labour leaders in India and do not even know who they are. I have written to Joshi<sup>3</sup> & Baptista<sup>4</sup> but I do not expect them to do much. I wish you would get the Indian Trade Union Council to take up the matter.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29(82-A)/1927, Part III, p. 255. N.M.M.L.
2. The Chinese question broadly was that the Kuomintang Government in China were trying to reduce the influence of the European Powers in that country, and this was being resisted by these Powers.
3. Narayan Malhar Joshi (1879-1955); joined Servants of India Society, 1909 and was connected with various social reform organisations; General Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress, 1925-29 and again from 1940-1948; deputy member of the governing body of the International Labour Organisation 1922-24 and member 1933-1944 and 1946-48; Member, Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1919-1923; nominated member of the Legislative Assembly for many years from 1902 to 1947; Member, Royal Commission on Indian Labour as representative of labour; attended Round Table Conferences 1930, 1931 and 1932 and meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
4. Joseph Baptista (1864-1931); took a prominent part in the Indian Home Rule and labour movements; was President, Bombay Provincial Conference, 1915, and Indian Home Rule League, 1916-26; Member, Legislative Assembly, 1926-27; President, All-India Trade Union Congress, 1922-23; Labour Delegate to the Labour Conference, Geneva, 1924; President, Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1925.

I enclose a letter I received from Bridgeman<sup>5</sup> for your information.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Reginald Bridgeman (b. 1884); after his retirement from the British diplomatic service, became an active member of the British Labour Party and served for a few years as Secretary of the British branch of the League against Imperialism.

**20. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>**

25.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,

Many thanks for your letter of the 6th January enclosing a cheque for £50. As I have already informed you, the Brussels Congress meets on February 10th, the preliminary committee meetings taking place from February 5th. I hope to go to Brussels early in February. I shall of course send you a report of the proceedings, specially in regard to India.

I was sorry to notice the strange omission of all reference to the Chinese situation in the proceedings at Gauhati. This situation is dominating politics in Europe and a great deal of attention is being paid to it. The latest developments point almost to war and if a war begins, Russia may be dragged in. I find in today's papers that Indian troops are being sent to China and Lord Irwin<sup>2</sup> has addressed the Assembly on the subject. All this may happen but evidently Indian politicians attach no significance to it and do not even care to pass a pious resolution. I wonder at times why different groups and parties in India are so bitter against each other. Fundamentally they seem to have more or less the same moderate mentality, whether they call themselves Liberals, Swarajists or No-changers. The mention of independence frightens them and every effort is made to dissociate oneself from the idea or from its implications. The Indian States and foreign policy are taboo and not to be discussed; the army and problems of defence are beyond us, and so we spend all our energy in protesting, with varying degrees of emphasis, against internments and imprisonments and regulations etc. I am afraid this

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-21(79), 1926-27, p. 79. N.M.M.L.

2. Viceroy of India 1926-31.

very tame and constitutional and legal and proper and reasonable activity raises no enthusiasm in me.

My wife is getting on fairly well.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 21. The Psychology of Indian Nationalism<sup>1</sup>

More than two decades ago a great Indian, Mr. G. K. Gokhale, whose life was consecrated to the service of his motherland, founded an association called the Servants of India Society. This was a little group of men devoted to the service of India. In the rules of this association Mr. Gokhale referred with gentle irony to the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, which had joined the destinies of India and England. Inscrutable indeed was this dispensation which brought together in the relation of rulers and ruled two races and peoples so dissimilar and so little capable of understanding each other. Perhaps a healthy contact between the two types would have done good to both by humanising them more and toning down their angularities. But there is little of health, where an alien race governs another, however good intentions might be. Cooperation to be productive of good must be the cooperation of equals, not that miscalled cooperation which is based on the masterfulness of the rulers and the servility of the ruled.

And so we have the extraordinary fact that after a century and half of British rule in India, the two races are as apart from each other as ever, and today each views the other with resentment and hostility. The Indian being the under-dog has at least tried to understand the psychology of his rulers, not with great success it must be admitted, for passion and lack of sympathy make it difficult to appreciate another. But the English have not had even this inducement and the average Englishman is singularly incapable of appreciating, or even trying to appreciate a viewpoint different from his own. India is to him but a

1. Article in *The Review of Nations*, Vol. I, No. 1, published in Geneva, January 1927.

part of the mysterious and effete East, which always plots and intrigues most irrationally against the God-ordained might and majesty of England, and ungratefully forgets the many favours which England has bestowed on her. Has not England given India the railways, the telegraph and the telephone and established the Pax Britannica? It does not occur to him that there are other things, of the mind and the spirit, not to mention material good, more vital than railways and the like, and India may not have fared well in regard to them. Nor does it occur to him that other countries even in the East have developed railways and the telegraph and the telephone without England's help, and perhaps India also might have done so if Providence in its inscrutable wisdom had not thrust England on her. And peace is good, but even the terrors and the misery of the battlefield are better than the peace of the graveyard.

A little imagination, some fellow feeling, and less of self-complacency and smug unctuousness would have gone a long way to solve the problem of India to the mutual advantage of both England and India. Unhappily the necessary qualities have been wholly lacking and the problem will solve itself in its own way, but this way may bring, as it has already done, a great deal of suffering to India and some unpleasant surprises to England.

That India desires to control her own affairs and to regain her lost dignity is natural enough and requires no explanation or justification. The psychology of Indian nationalism is fundamentally the same as that of any other nation striving to rid itself of alien domination. But perhaps it is worth while to enquire how the nationalist movement in India took its present shape and gathered the impetus which it has had in recent years. To an outsider India appears today to be rent with faction and strife — the Hindu and the Muslim fighting, and various political parties bitterly opposing each other. This is largely true, and yet the dominant fact remains that almost every thinking Indian is thoroughly distrustful of England and desirous of getting rid of her rule. Never before was there so much and such widespread hostility to British rule and want of faith in the *bona fides* of the English. Every political party of any standing and even the great communal organisations have declared that India must have responsible government. Some people want independence, while others lay stress on dominion rule, knowing well that a thin line divides the two. The methods of political parties differ and they may quarrel among themselves about achieving their goal, but the fact remains that in essentials the goal of all is the same.

An individual or country in adversity always looks back to its more prosperous days and usually magnifies them. The Indian of today is

no exception to this and not without reason he can feel and express pride for many of the achievements of his ancestors. It is necessary thus to look back on Indian history to understand the mentality of new India. This will also help us to see what truth there is in the oft repeated charge that India has never been a nation and was always a prey to anarchy and invasion till the British came.

The modern idea of nationhood is of recent growth even in the West and India in the past certainly was not, and is not even now wholly, a nation like France or England is today. It was too vast a country to develop on those lines before the advent of modern methods of communication. But even in the remote past there has always been a fundamental unity of India — a unity of a common faith and culture. India was *Bharata*, the holy land of the Hindus, and it is not without significance that the great places of Hindu pilgrimage are situated in the four corners of India — the extreme South overlooking Ceylon, the extreme West washed by the Arabian Sea, the East facing the Bay of Bengal and the North in the Himalayas. Sanskrit was the language of the learned throughout the length and breadth of the country and the provincial languages in the North were all derived from Sanskrit and were closely allied, the four principal southern languages being greatly influenced by Sanskrit\*. Every resident of the country felt a certain kinship with all others who lived in the great sub-continent, and those who came from outside India were the foreigners, the barbarians. Nonetheless India was not a modern nation. It was a group of closely allied people with a common culture and religion. There were usually separate kingdoms and occasionally a powerful ruler brought most of them under one imperial sway. It must not be forgotten that Asoka the Great had an empire greater in extent than the present British Indian Empire, and subsequently the great Gupta Dynasty ruled for many generations over a vast empire which comprised the whole of Northern and Central India. The Mughal Empire of later times is well known. India by reason of her size must be compared to the whole of Western and Central and Southern Europe and in this comparison it will be seen that India had right through the ancient and mediaeval period far more peace and orderly government than Europe. The coming of the Muslims brought a foreign element into India but they came in comparatively small numbers and they did not disturb the culture and the institutions of the country. These institutions were

\* The notion that India has hundreds of languages is, like most other notions about her, entirely based on the lively imagination of some persons and has no basis in fact. India has a dozen languages, one of which — Hindustani — is spoken by about a third of her entire population and is understood by a great part of the rest.

partly influenced by them but on the whole they adapted themselves to them. One fact is noteworthy. During all the troubles and invasions the village system of local self-government, which was the backbone of the Indian system of government, endured and was little affected.

The gradual disintegration and fall of the Moghal Empire produced unstable conditions in India and there was a period of interneceine conflict. This was peculiarly favourable to foreign adventurers and the English took full advantage of it and gradually, by playing off one ruler against the other, established their sway.

It is not possible to mention here the achievements in art and literature and thought and even the science of government during the Hindu and Muslim periods. But they should be borne in mind to understand the Indian's pride in his past and his contemptuous rejection of the British claim that they rescued India from anarchy and barbarism.

This, in briefest outline, is the picture of the past which the Indian has in his mind. Very naturally he exaggerates the good in it and forgets the bad. But making all allowance, the past of India has a great deal worthy of a great country and compares very favourably with the squabbles and incessant conflicts of the little countries of Europe. She fell an easy prey to the conquerors from the West owing undoubtedly to decadence and want of cohesion and specially to her not having made sufficient progress in the science of war.

The British came to India as adventurers and freebooters and their first period was admittedly a predatory one. Enormous sums of money were taken out of India and individual Englishmen — the "nababs" as they were called in those days — made vast fortunes. This was immediately followed by a more systematized method of extortion. The chief object was to fill the coffers of the East India Company to enable it to pay heavy dividends to its shareholders and to increase British trade with India. It is well known that the most cruel and unscrupulous methods were adopted to kill flourishing Indian industries in order to find a market for Lancashire goods. Duties ranging up to 120% were put on Indian stuffs imported into England and it was even made an offence in England to wear some Indian cloths. With the coming of the British and the development of the sea routes India also lost touch with her Asiatic neighbours, and thus the foreign trade of India was crushed. The British authorities then turned their attention to the internal trade and imposed all manner of heavy transit and other duties which made it very difficult to send Indian goods from one part of the country to another. Meanwhile Lancashire goods had free and easy access to the Indian market, and so gradually the great Indian cottage industries were annihilated, and Lancashire cotton and other English

goods had a free field. The result of all these measures was to make millions unemployed and to throw them on the land. But the land tax was heavy and was continually being increased at periodical assessments. The people became more and more impoverished while at the same time a stream of money went to enrich the East India Company and the manufacturers in England.

The third period saw the gradual consolidation and extension of British rule. In all departments which strengthened the hold of the Government or brought in revenue efficiency was shown but little was done for the people. Pious professions of bringing enlightenment to the heathen were frequent enough but the chief consideration was dividends. An attempt was made to start education on Western lines. The old village schools, which were widespread, died out as did the system of village self-government. The few schools and colleges started to give Western education only effected an infinitesimal number of persons and their main object was to train clerks for British offices and departments of government. This period came to a sudden end with the great Mutiny in 1857.

As usual the English knew little and cared less for what the people were thinking and feeling. Resentment and hostility against the policy and methods of the English were growing all round but they did not notice them. Ultimately a spark started a great conflagration. There can be no doubt that the Mutiny, as it is called by English writers, was a national rising against the British, and if by any chance it had succeeded, it would have been a war of independence. But patriots who fail are dubbed traitors and suffer the fate of traitors. Unhappily the mutineers committed barbarities and excesses of the worst kind. But the East India Company was even more atrocious and the memory of that nightmare of horror lingers. The rising was suppressed and the people cowed down. An Arms Act was passed depriving them of their arms and India was administered by the British Parliament direct and not by the East India Company.

The subsequent period was a quiet one and many administrative reforms were introduced by the British. A number of able administrators perfected the bureaucratic system of government, and the Indian Civil Service became a highly organised and powerful body of men, often actuated by good intentions for the peoples, so long as these intentions did not interfere with their own powers and privileges or touch the basis of British rule or injure British commerce. The control of the British Parliament was nominal and the Indian Civil Service which was until quite recently entirely recruited in England, had complete control over the destinies of India, the people of India having no place or power in government. Viceroys came and went and

seldom succeeded in doing anything against the wishes of the I.C.S. Such of them, as Lord Ripon, who tried to go counter to the I.C.S. were soon brought to book. It was natural that a close corporation like the I.C.S., uncontrolled either by Indian public opinion or by the British Parliament, should become more and more imbued with a sense of its own virtues and intolerant of all criticism and opposition. Like little Olympians, cut off from the world of suffering humanity, they sat on their mountain tops or in their offices, infallible and unapproachable except to such as brought them votive offerings of flattery and servility. All wisdom lay in them and the gift to probe the hearts of the millions committed to their charge, and finding, without any reference to them, what was good for them and what was not. And the luckless person who dared to question this wisdom was guilty of the deadliest of sins.

Nearly thirty years after the Mutiny, as the memory of its horrors receded, the new nationalism began to find fresh expression and the Indian National Congress was founded. This was at first entirely confined to the English educated few and it was a very moderate body, asking in the most respectful of language for trivial reforms. Gradually it gained strength, but for long it continued to represent the moderate nationalist. Early in the 20th century the nationalist movement gathered head and some of the measures of the government, among which the most important was the partition of the province of Bengal, fanned the flames of nationalism and hostility to England. For the first time in recent history a great political leader, Tilak, who had influence not only amongst the English educated but with large masses of his countrymen, arose, and in Bengal and the West of India the people were greatly stirred. A movement for the boycott of British goods was started and it achieved considerable success. In Bengal and elsewhere terrorist crime took place and the British government tried to meet the situation by deportations without trial and other repressive measures. In the Congress itself there was a conflict between the moderate and advanced sections which ultimately had to break between the two and the extremists left the Congress. Tilak was sent to jail for a long period and the Bengal agitation came to an end by the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The result of the new methods of agitation was also the introduction of some reforms in the government whereby Indians were given councils without any powers. These reforms were introduced, as has indeed been admitted, to divide the two wings of the nationalist party and they succeeded admirably in doing so. During the great war British statesmen were lavish in their promises to India and many hopes were built on them. But even during the continuation of the war various incidents, including the press gang methods

of recruitment in the Punjab, went a long way to intensify resentment against England, and a feeling that British promises were not likely to be kept, started a vigorous agitation for Home Rule, as it was then called. This bore fruit in the announcement made on behalf of the British Parliament that responsible government was the goal of British policy in India and this was followed by the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms. But reforms delayed fall far short of expectations and seldom satisfy, and the demand for greater power and freedom, the more it is repressed the more it increases. The new scheme, which from an Englishman's point of view went far, fell flat and was bitterly criticised by the Indian Congress.

Meanwhile strange things were happening and the mind of India was vastly exercised and agitated. The close of the war brought to her not the freedom she longed for but Rowlatt Bills which were ostensibly aimed at suppressing revolutionary violence but which in reality gave great powers to the police and the executive to suppress political activity by arrest and detention without trial. The reaction in the country was tremendous and every shade of opinion was ranged against this law, but in spite of this unanimous opposition the bills were passed by the government. This brought a new force of tremendous import into Indian politics. Mr. Gandhi, already widely known and respected on account of his great fight in South Africa for the rights of the Indians domiciled there, came forward with a novel weapon of peaceful *satyagraha* and civil disobedience. His temporary arrests led to riots in some places and then followed the martial law regime in the Punjab. The massacre in Amritsar by Dyer and his crawling order and numerous atrocities perpetrated during this period by the Punjab officials drove the iron into the soul of India. India knew as never before what British rule meant and what it rested upon, and curiously, instead of being terrorised as she had been after the Mutiny, the very horror of the Punjab gave fresh courage and made her resolve to put an end to conditions which could permit such happenings.

The treatment accorded to Turkey and the Khilafat by England was also greatly resented by the Muslims in India, and from the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat was born noncooperation which took hold of India and permeated to the remotest villages and was probably the greatest mass movement which any country has had in recent times.

To examine this great movement with any thoroughness would require the consideration of many details and this is not possible here. Noncooperation essentially was a passionate protest against British dominion in India and its method of action was to withdraw peacefully all support from the British government. It was based on the admitted assumption that British rule cannot exist in India without

the support and the exploitation of large numbers of the Indian people. It was something like Sinn Fein in Ireland, only it was wider and deeper. It was not, as a whole, an attack on Western civilization or even English education. But it was felt that of all the injuries done by England to India—the destruction of her manufactures, the impoverishment of her people—the greatest injury was moral rather than physical. She had deliberately emasculated us and developed the slave mentality in us and made us feel powerless and unable to contend against her might. She had made us despise even the good that was in our culture and by a system of education, which taught us false or perverted history, had turned us into a nation of clerks and underlings. She had developed groups and classes of people—her army of subordinates in the government service, the people attached to her law courts, the merchants dealing in British goods etc. whose subsistence was apparently bound up with the continuance of the British connection. So noncooperation struck at these strong ropes that tied us to Britain. The Councils were boycotted and so were the law courts; foreign cotton goods were not to be bought or sold and were to be replaced by the hand-spun and hand-woven product of our cottages and villages; the government schools were to be left, not because we were against education, but because the education that was given in them was anti-national. Later in the scheme were the boycott of government service, civil and military, and ultimately a refusal to pay taxes. And all this was to be done without any resort to violence. It was logically a perfect scheme and no government could withstand it. But it required a tremendous deal of self-sacrifice and forbearance.

The history of India during the years 1920 to 1922 shows the wonderful extent to which the people responded to this call. How enormous incomes were cheerfully given up and sufferings were willingly borne and how about 25,000 men and women went peacefully to jail. The movement met with greater success than could have been expected, but the removal of nearly all the leaders, who were put in jail, and the ubiquitous presence of the *agent provocateur* led to a break up of discipline and to acts of violence which resulted in Mr. Gandhi and the Congress suspending the movement.

But noncooperation did not die, nor can it die. It has come to India to stay. The political movement took a different turn and the Congress decided to enter the Councils, not from any love of them but to carry on the fight there. And this fight inside the country continues and is likely to continue, although for the present it is clouded by internal dissensions.

Noncooperation, as has been said, roused up the masses of India. During the intensity of the struggle their attention was all in the fight but when the reaction came and success was delayed, the newly released energy went in wrong directions. There, still and at places stagnant waters could not be stirred up without unpleasant odours. Today this energy is turned inwards and helps in adding to mutual bitterness and strife. Indian politics appear to be dominated by the communal question, the antagonism said to exist between the Hindu and Muslim. There is no doubt that there is this antagonism today but there is also little doubt that much of it is the creation of interested parties. All who are acquainted with conditions know that England cannot hold India if the Hindu and the Moslem are together, and the strength of the noncooperation movement lay in this that they did act together. They also know that it has been the deliberate policy of the Government to play off one community against another. Officially this is of course denied but unofficially many even of the officials admit it. And such of us as have taken part in Indian politics know full well that at every turn we have to face the *agent provocateur* and even our national assemblies are full of the agents of the government's secret service. The responsibility of England for the communal situation in India is not a light one. Nonetheless no Indian will deny that ours is the primary responsibility and if we were not very much at fault no outsider could make us act in the foolish and criminal way we have done. And the solution will also come from us probably sooner than many expect.

India and China, though different in many ways, have much in common. China today is in a welter of civil war, the proteges and hirelings of foreign powers trying to suppress the nationalists and prevent the formation of a strong and independent State. But the victorious armies of Canton are going forward surely and steadily and every Indian rejoices at their success. India too may find the way to her goal through the present strife and faction. For it must be remembered that the long sleep of India is over, and if the waking is a troubled one, nonetheless the strength increases and as soon as the internal squabbles are adjusted, this energy and strength will all turn to the one goal which almost every one in India desires.

Why does an Indian desire freedom for his country? Is it strange that he should do so? What is the present position in the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations? India is an original member of the League of Nations, but the men who claim to represent her are nominated by the British Government and represent the government alone. In this Imperial Conference she finds a place by courtesy and

the noble gentleman<sup>2</sup> who has recently been "representing" her appeared to be overwhelmed in the high and distinguished company and all he could do was to express repeatedly his gratitude for being allowed to sit on the doorstep. In the British Dominions an Indian is treated as a *pariah*, and in South Africa especially, colour legislation has repeatedly humiliated him and made his lot terrible to bear. Even in parts of the Empire directly administered by the British Colonial Office, like Kenya, he is tolerated as an inferior being and not permitted to own property in the highlands which are the peculiar preserve of the few British settlers.

In his own country his lot is no better. He is cribbed and confined and has no opportunities for growth. All creative and artistic effort has largely died out of him under the uncongenial and stifling atmosphere and a third-rate literary education had made him fit only for the office stool. After 150 years or more of British rule the magnificent result is a bare 8 per cent of literates. There are no funds, so says the Government, for increasing education or more sanitation, or hospitals, or other nation-building services. For most of the revenue is swallowed up by an enormous expenditure on an army one of whose chief purposes is to keep down turbulent nationalists. Indians are charged with being unable to undertake the defence of their country after a deliberate policy of depriving them of their arms and refusing to admit them, except recently in a very small measure, to commissioned ranks. Interminable enquires go on as to how further commissions can be given, but when it comes to increasing the pay of the Indian Civil Service, the highest paid service in the world, a Royal Commission is hurried through in the teeth of unanimous Indian protest and the pay is increased and free passage to England granted. Funds were not lacking for this.

If an Indian turns to commerce and industry he finds the policy of the British Government is always, and perhaps naturally, partial to British interests and firms. Highly inadequate arrangements exist in the country for imparting technical education and the Government of India did not even have a Department for Commerce and Industry till Lord Curzon's<sup>3</sup> time. The exchange and financial policy of government has admittedly done tremendous injury to Indian interests, the corresponding gain going to British firms. Till last year there was the

2. At the Imperial Conference held in England in October 1926, the Maharaja of Burdwan was content to acknowledge and acquiesce in the inferior position given to him at the Conference.

3. Viceroy of India 1899-1905.

unique spectacle of the Government of India taxing cotton goods manufactured in India itself. The cotton industry in India nearly broke down under this burden and ultimately the excise duty was removed.

In the Government of India, the Indian has little influence. The decisions of the new Councils in vital matters are overridden or ignored by the Viceroy. The Viceroy and his Council have powers to initiate legislation or to certify any measure although the Legislative Assembly or Provincial Council may deliberately vote against it. In the Assembly the Swarajists adopted the old constitutional method of protest and voted down supplies but the Viceroy could and did forthwith reverse their decision.

But the terrible fact which stares every one in India is the appalling poverty of the people. India is not a country of gaily bedecked Maharajahs displaying themselves and their jewels periodically in the West after the manner of star artistes of the cinema world as many people seem to imagine, but a grim land full of millions of poverty-stricken peasants and labourers for whom the next meal is always a problem, a problem which is often not solved. Competent observers have come to the conclusion that poverty has increased greatly since the coming of the British and is still increasing. But indeed statistics are hardly necessary to establish this for he who leaves the few towns with their thin veneer of activity and prosperity and goes deep into the villages, can see it for himself in the sunken eyes and the hopeless looks of the people. What will India be like in the future if this continues?

Meanwhile, many of the best of India's sons lie in jail or in forced detention. Many of them are exiles in foreign lands unable to return to their motherland. Under the Bengal Regulation, one of the gifts of Lord Reading and the last British Labour Cabinet to India, a large number of young men have been in jail without trial or without even the formulation of any charge. Conspiracy trials are frequent and young men whose chief fault was that they loved their country too ardently, if rashly and foolishly, suffer the extreme penalty of the law. This is the Pax Britannica in India and it is not surprising that the Indian is thoroughly dissatisfied with it and looks forward to the day when he will have no more of it.

What the future will bring it will be vain to prophesy but it is clear that no settlement short of complete self-rule will solve the problem. That self-rule may mean complete independence or it may mean what is called Dominion Status. Most Indian politicians talk about Dominion Status but perhaps they do so because it is apparently easier to achieve. In reality the vast majority desire independence and some have the courage to say so. The British Empire does not appear to

be in good health and daily it becomes more and more nebulous. The chief link between England and the Dominions is one of sentiment but sentiment does not carry one far when interests clash. If India were a Dominion there would be little of this sentiment, in fact at present there is some thing very much the reverse of it, and her economic interests are bound to clash with those of England. It is thus a little difficult to see how India could continue as a free member of the British Commonwealth. But perhaps the future may bring its surprises and India may find a place there. For India has no desire to nourish past grievances. She looks to the future.

One tendency however is already noticeable. The idea of closer contact with Asiatic nations is becoming increasingly popular. The similarity of many ideas and cultures is partly accountable for this but the real reason is, undoubtedly, a common antagonism to European domination and exploitation. There is some talk in the East of an Asiatic Federation but this may be for the present a little premature. But whenever India achieves real freedom, she is sure to be drawn towards her neighbouring countries and to try to work in a large measure in concert with them.

## 22. Statement to the Press at Brussels<sup>1</sup>

I am glad to have the opportunity to associate myself on behalf of the Indian National Congress and the people of India whom it represents with the aims and objects of this International Congress. The Indian Congress stands for the freedom of India; freedom from foreign rule and intervention as well as the liberation of the poor and oppressed from all exploitation. We welcome this International Congress because, as we understand it, it has been called together to further these aims and objects in the international sphere. We realise that there is much in common in the struggle which various subject and semi-subject and oppressed peoples are carrying on today. Their opponents are often the same although they sometimes appear in different guises and the means employed for their subjection are often similar. Contact

1. 9 February 1927. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29 (82-A), Part 11/1927, pp. 183—185.  
N.M.M.L.

between, the various peoples will lead to a better understanding of each other's problems and difficulties and is bound to result in closer cooperation which must bring success nearer to us all. The fabric of imperialism looks imposing and appears to hold together, but any dent in it will automatically lead to its total destruction.

The Indian National Congress is necessarily national and has nationalism as its basis, but as our great leader Gandhi has said, our nationalism is based on the most intense internationalism. The problem of Indian freedom is for us a vital and urgently essential, but at the same time it is not merely a purely national, problem. India is a world problem and as in the past so in the future other countries and peoples will be vitally affected by the condition of India.

Today the strongest and the most far-reaching imperialism is that of England and English imperialism and policy always have India as their corner-stone. Both Egypt and other parts of Africa have suffered domination because British imperialism wanted to strengthen its hold on India and to protect its sea routes to that country. The importance of India and her future for this International Congress is thus obvious.

The Indian national movement has welcomed with the liveliest sympathy and hope the successes of the nationalists in China. It has been a matter of shame and sorrow to us that the British Government should venture to send Indian troops to China<sup>2</sup> in an attempt to coerce the Chinese. You are probably aware that the Indian National Congress has protested in the strongest language against this and the nationalist members of the Indian legislature wanted to raise this question in the legislature but the English Viceroy exercised his veto on the ground that it raised matters of foreign policy. Mr. Gandhi and other Indian leaders have emphatically on behalf of the people of India expressed their ardent hope that the Chinese nationalists will bring about the final emancipation of China. The Indian press has condemned the Government's action and mass meetings have been held in various parts of the country for the purpose. India today is with China not only because she has every sympathy for her but because she feels that China's successful fight is the most hopeful sign of the future downfall of imperialism. As of old imperialism is trying to utilise one subject country to coerce another but in spite of her weakness India is not so weak today as to permit herself to be employed as a pawn in the imperialist game.

2. In January 1927 it was announced that India being the nearest part of the British Empire from which troops could be immediately despatched to China, a contingent of Indian troops was being sent.

The attempt to use India against China makes it all the more necessary for the forces of nationalism in the subject nations to cooperate together for their common good. And I trust that this Congress will help us to bring about this cooperation and will thus bring nearer the freedom of oppressed nationalities.

### 23. Speech at the Brussels Congress<sup>1</sup>

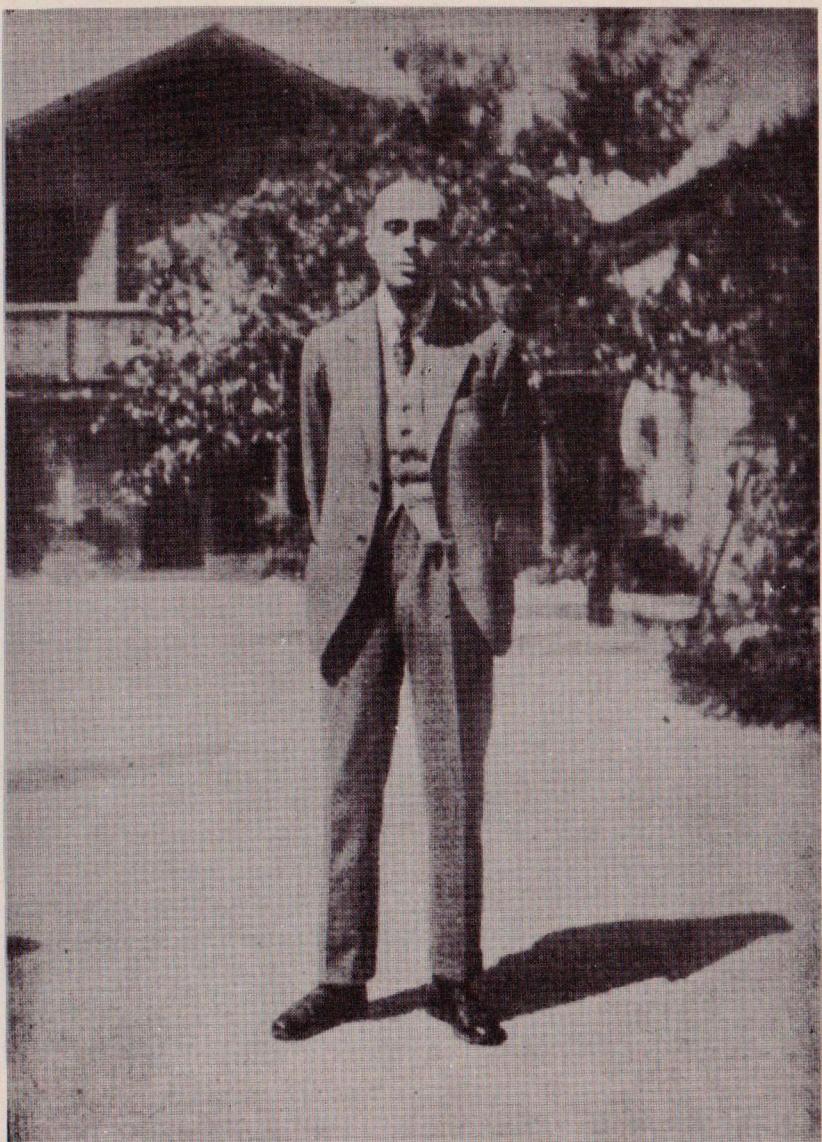
Mr. President and friends,

I have the greatest pleasure in conveying the warm and cordial greetings of the Indian National Congress to this Conference and in associating our national movement with this joint endeavour to combat imperialism. We in India have felt the full weight of imperialism. We know exactly what it means, and we are naturally interested in any movement which concerns imperialism. Indeed, if you want a really typical example to enable you to understand the results of imperialism I doubt if you could find a better one than India. In India's internal condition, as our President<sup>2</sup> pointed out, you see the way in which British capitalism has suppressed and exploited the workers. Whatever phase of imperialism you study, you have a wonderful example in India. Our problems, of course, concern us deeply, but I would venture to point out to you, whether you come from China, Egypt or other distant countries, that our interests are much the same, and the problem of India is of interest and importance to you.

It is not possible for me here to tell you the story of Indian exploitation, of the way in which India has been utilised, suppressed and exploited by other people. It is a long and distressing story, and all I can do is to point out to you one or two of the more important factors, which we in this International Congress must especially bear in mind, because they have a particular relation to the work we have to do. You have heard of various disturbances, of various massacres and shootings, and most of you have heard of the Amritsar affair. Do not imagine

1. 10 February 1927. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29(82-A)/1927, Part I, pp. 85—89  
N.M.M.L.

2. Stephen Owen Davies (1886-1972); leader of the South Wales Miners' Federation; M.P. 1934-1972.



AT BRUSSELS, 1927.



... a gift from me, an offering from the people, to the people. Toller an old and  
well-known German socialist, Ledebur, a famous socialist from East Asia, from China,  
a city near name I don't know, and the German, a former Comintern official and  
invited over the Congress.

WITH SOME DELEGATES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AGAINST IMPERIALISM,  
BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 1927.

that because it gained greater notoriety in the world than many other events that it stood alone as the worst incident in the history of India since the British arrived there. They came there, as you are no doubt aware, taking sides first with one party and then another, and thus gradually taking a firm hold. Right through their stay there they have adopted the old policy of "Divide and Rule". I regret to say that that policy is still very much in evidence. Well, they came and the earlier history of their occupation is one of the most atrocious and shameless examples ever seen in the history of the whole world. It is admitted, even by British historians who are not exactly impartial in the matter, that the earlier history of India under the rule of the British is simply a predatory one, a predatory period where freebooters went unrestricted and looted and despoiled the country. Also perhaps you know of what is called the Indian Mutiny, which took place 70 years ago. It is called the Indian Mutiny, but if chance had willed it otherwise and the rebels had been successful, it might have been called the Indian War of Independence. But what I was really pointing out to you in passing was this — Amritsar was nothing to what happened in the case of what is called the Indian Mutiny, but since then things have been happening continually and it is even now not at all uncommon for shooting to take place, in fact, it is terribly common for innumerable comrades and friends of ours to go to jail with or without trial. Indeed, many of our best comrades in India usually live in jail, or are exiled and unable to return to their homeland. You may have heard also perhaps of not a new but a favourite way of the British in India, of taking hold of people and putting them in jail without trial or even accusation. This sometimes attracts a little attention. But the real injury that the British have done to India, the real exploitation is something even more serious than the shootings, hangings, massacres which occasionally gain some notoriety. That is the systematic way in which they have crushed the workers and peasants of India, and made India what she is today. We read in history, not only ancient but even fairly recent history, of the riches of India. India has attracted various peoples from various corners of the world because of her wealth and riches, and today if you come to India the one fact staring you in the face is the terrible poverty there. The way in which the great majority of the people do not know where to find their next meal, and as a consequence, often not getting their meals, gradually die of starvation or semi-starvation is appalling.

That is the state of India today. It does not require statistics, facts or figures to convince you that India in the course of the last few generations has deteriorated terribly and is in such a bad way that if something drastic is not done to stop this process India may even cease

to exist as a nation. You know, perhaps, that years ago — soon after the British came — how ruthless they were in their endeavour to make industries profitable to themselves. In those days the new doctrine of the trusteeship of the Indian peoples was not mentioned. Our oppression was perhaps not worse than it is today, but it was franker. There was ruthless and open exploitation and suppression of all Indian industries. This was bad enough but even worse followed. Gradually, by means of suppressing old systems of education, by disarming us, and in a hundred and one different ways they crushed the spirit of the Indian people and tried to make them lose all capacity for effective and creative work. That, I say, was the deliberate policy of the British in India and they carried it out by trying to divide us among ourselves. Having disarmed us they tell us that we are not capable of defending our country. Having brought in a system of education which killed all our old education, and substituted something which was ridiculously small and ridiculously inadequate, having taught us false history and attempted to teach us to despise our own country and to glorify England, they now tell us we are not sufficiently educated to be a free country !

Now it is frequently stated and made much of in the English Press, that the Indians are fighting against each other, the Hindu against the Moslem, etc. We must remember, apart from the fact that these troubles are greatly exaggerated that it is the policy of the British to create these troubles, or where they already exist to increase them and take every step to keep them going, even where they could easily be put down. That has been the policy of the British in spite of any denials from any quarter. Well, what is the condition of India today? We talk about exploitation. We have plenty of it. Not merely a single exploitation, as it may be called, but sometimes a double or even a triple one. We have a part of India called the Indian States, where under the "protection" of the British a feudal system prevails, and often the English people point out to us and point out against us in other countries : "Look at this part of India, which has some sort of self-rule. Other parts of India are far more advanced." I am prepared to admit that charge as being not entirely wrong, often these areas are far less advanced than other parts, but there are things the British forget to point out. They forget to tell us that they themselves have especially bolstered up these Indian States, have especially prevented them from advancing, in short have kept them as they are. Unhappily, the wretches living there submit not only to exploitation and oppression as a result of British rule, but it must be admitted that they cannot advance also because of their own incompetent rulers. But it is the British who really enslave them and do not permit them to progress.

Take again the big land owners. There again, the system of land tenure in a large part of India is a feudal system that has been kept going and imposed upon us by the British. It is exceedingly difficult to get it changed so long as the British Government is not willing to change it. As associates in the policy of the British Government in India, we must consider the Indian princes and big land owners who feel that they cannot submit to a free India which would result in the freedom from exploitation of the peasants. Then again, we often have an unholy alliance of British capitalists with Indian capitalists. So we in India have to submit to various and manifold methods of exploitation.

Now then, the study of past history of events in the past few years proves that British policy has been based largely on the question of holding India. After all, we here know a great deal of the British Empire. Try to conceive for a moment what it would have been by now if Britain did not hold India. There would have been no British Empire. What it will be in the future, if and when India becomes independent, I cannot say, but certainly the British Empire would cease to exist. Naturally, therefore, from their capitalist and imperialist points of view they wanted to do everything in their power to hold on to India. All their foreign policy has been largely shaped with this object in view because it is so important for Britain to hold India and control that vast territory. They must, therefore, keep a stranglehold on India. The result is that India has suffered and is suffering. But that is not all. On account of India a large number of other countries have suffered and are suffering. You have heard of the most recent example of British imperialism in regard to India—the sending of Indian troops to China. They were sent in spite of the fact that the National Congress of India expressed its strongest opposition. I must remind you that Indian troops, unhappily to my shame I confess it, have been utilised many times by the British in oppressing other people. I shall tell you the names of a number of countries where Indian troops have been utilised by the British for this purpose—in China they first went in 1840, in 1927 they are still going and they have been actively engaged there innumerable times during these 87 years. They have been to Egypt, to Abyssinia, in the Persian Gulf, to Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Georgia, Tibet, Afghanistan and Burma. It is a fairly formidable list.

I want you to appreciate that the Indian problem is not a purely national problem, but that it affects a large number of other countries directly and the whole world indirectly, in the sense that it directly affects the greatest and most powerful imperialism of our time. It is obvious that such a condition of affairs is intolerable for us in India. We cannot go on, not merely because freedom is good and slavery

bad, but because it is a matter of life and death for us and our country. Not only that; it is equally intolerable for you. You cannot go on in this way. You who come from various countries, from the four corners of the earth, cannot put up with having these tremendous barriers to your own liberation. I do submit that the exploitation of India by the British is a barrier for other countries that are being oppressed and exploited (applause). It is an urgent necessity for you that we gain our freedom. The noble example of the Chinese nationalists has filled us with hope, and we earnestly want as soon as we can to be able to emulate them and follow in their footsteps (long applause). We desire the fullest freedom for our country, not only, of course, internally, but the freedom to develop such relations with our neighbours and other countries as we may desire. It is because we think that this International Congress affords us a chance of this cooperation that we welcome it and greet it.

#### 24. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Brussels  
11.2.27

My dear Rangaswami,

Mr. Roger Baldwin, the Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union<sup>2</sup>, wants me to put him in touch with you. He has been very actively engaged in the United States in fighting the encroachments on individual freedom and liberty which have grown so common there, and has assisted in the defence of people who have been harassed in this way. He is prepared to send some money, out of the funds at his disposal, to India for the defence of political prisoners there. He wrote to this effect to Lajpat Rai and Andrews but neither of them sent him any answer. He has now asked me if he can do anything else in the matter and it seems to me that the best course for him to adopt would be to communicate officially with the Indian Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-38 (186-V)/1926, pp. 13—14. N.M.M.L.

2. Roger Baldwin was from 1917 to 1950 Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union and served with Jawaharlal on the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism.

You will remember that a special fund was started by the Cawnpore Congress for the defence etc. of political sufferers. I do not know if there is a special committee to manage this fund. In any case you will be able to, through the Congress office, put the money sent to you to the best use. I have no doubt that you and the Congress will cordially welcome American help, not merely because of its monetary value but specially because it is an expression of the goodwill of friends in America. I hope also that our Congress office will remain in touch with Mr. Roger Baldwin, who is one of the most courageous and effective workers in the United States.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**25. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>**

Brussels  
16.2.27

My dear Rangaswami,

I am dead tired after 8 or 9 days of the Congress here. I have not had a good night's sleep and hardly a decent meal since I came here. I cannot therefore write to you much about the Congress. For the present I am sending you a list of organisations represented—not a very correct one—and copies of some resolutions. A very long cable was sent to Srinivasa Iyengar<sup>2</sup> two days ago. I hope he received it.

Next week I hope to write more fully and a full report will follow soon. Meanwhile I hope that every publicity will be given to this Congress.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29(82-A)/1927, Part III, p. 243. N.M.M.L.

2. S. Srinivasa Iyengar (1874-1941); Advocate-General of Madras who resigned his post in 1920 and joined the Congress; deputy leader of the Swarajist party in the Central Legislative Assembly; President of the Congress at Gauhati 1926; resigned from the Congress in 1930.

## 26. Report on the Brussels Congress<sup>1</sup>

In compliance with the resolution of the National Congress, passed at Gauhati, appointing me their representative at the International Congress against Imperialism, I had the honour to attend the sessions of this International Congress and to take part in its proceedings. I am submitting separately another report for publication and for distribution amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. But as it was not possible to refer to many matters in that report and as I wish the Working Committee to be in possession of all the facts, in order to enable them to take such action as they may deem necessary, I have decided to submit this further and more detailed report.

The Brussels Congress, regarded from any point of view, was an event of first class importance and it is likely to have far-reaching results. The English press, so far as I am aware, has given little or no publicity to it, with the exception of some Labour organs. The Continental press gave some more publicity but even here more or less satisfactory reports were confined to the Labour papers. This was not surprising as it is the deliberate policy of the big newspapers in the West to suppress and ignore such happenings. Quite a large number of press correspondents, including representatives of the big news agencies, were present at the public sessions of the Congress, but either their messages were suppressed or they themselves did not send any proper reports. Many of us were continually being pestered with requests for interviews from all manner of newspapers all over Europe and the press photographers made a public nuisance of themselves by taking scores of snapshots of most of us.

The Congress was, as such Congresses seldom are, very representative both of countries being exploited and oppressed by others and of workers' organisations. The list of organisations and delegates which I enclose will give some idea of the representative character of the Congress. This list is not quite correct as some people who are mentioned there did not come and others who are mentioned came. Among the countries represented China had the strongest representation. The Canton Government had a representative and so had the Kuo Min Tang<sup>2</sup>. Both

1. 19 February 1927. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29(82-A) 1927, Part II, pp. 151—182.  
N.M.L.

2. The Chinese National Peoples' Party organised by Sun Yat Sen. It was prominent from the 1920's and formed the government in 1928. After a prolonged civil war, it was overthrown by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

the Northern and Southern Chinese national armies sent one of their generals, and the Chinese labour organisations had several delegates. There were several Indians present representing students or local organisations in Europe but they could hardly be said to represent India. The fact however that the Indian National Congress was officially represented made the Indian representation important and weighty, inspite of the deficiencies of the representative in question. Egypt, Persia, Syria, Dutch East Indies, Annam, Korea, Morocco, French North Africa (both Arab and Negro), South Africa (both Negro and White Labour), United States (Negroes and White representatives of the minority movements), Mexico, & States of Central and South America, were some of the countries represented. The European countries sent labour leaders, many of them famous in the ranks of socialism. England sent quite a number of leaders of the left wing of the labour movement—among them being George Lansbury,<sup>3</sup> M.P.; Fenner Brockway<sup>4</sup>, Secretary of the I.L.P.; Davies, member of the Executive of the Miners' Federation; Beckett<sup>5</sup>, M.P.; Ellen Wilkinson<sup>6</sup>, M.P.; Bridgeman; Pollitt<sup>7</sup>; McManus<sup>8</sup>; etc. There were besides some men of note in literature, like Henri Barbusse and Toller<sup>9</sup>, the German dramatist.

3. (1859-1940); leading British pacifist; founded the *Daily Herald* in 1912 and edited it for many years; member of the Labour Government 1929-31 and leader of the Opposition 1931-35.
4. Fenner, now Lord Brockway (b. 1888); for many years Secretary of the Independent Labour Party; attended the Congress session at Madras in December 1927; rejoined the Labour Party in 1946.
5. John Beckett, at this time a member of the Independent Labour Party. He later joined the British Union of Fascists.
6. (1891-1947); well-known Labour politician, who served as Minister for Education in the Labour Government from 1945 till her death in February 1947. She was a close friend of Jawaharlal.
7. Harry Pollitt (1890-1960); Secretary of the British Communist Party from 1929 to 1956, and Chairman from 1956 till his death in 1960.
8. Leading British Communist who died soon after the Brussels Congress.
9. Ernst Toller (1893-1939); was a personal friend of Jawaharlal. His life was an unhappy one. He was in prison from 1919 to 1924 for participating in the Bavarian revolution. In 1932 he left Germany and after living in exile in Europe and the United States, committed suicide in 1939. On his death Jawaharlal sent the following message: "I met Ernst Toller for the first time in Brussels at a meeting of the League against Imperialism. This was I think early in 1927. We were attracted to each other and I met him subsequently on two or three occasions, I think, in London. I read several of his books but in English translation. He struck me as a man of great ability and with a strong feeling of humanity. He was very sensitive to human suffering, and it was a matter of grief for me to learn of the circumstances of his unfortunate death."

Among the senders of messages of goodwill there were Mr. Gandhi, Einstein<sup>10</sup> and Romain Rolland.

The gathering was thus a distinguished one and, considering the difficulties which the organisers had to contend against, it was a remarkably successful one. The organisers deserve credit for this but anyone present at the Congress could not help thinking that no amount of organisation could have made it a success if it had not supplied a real want. People in far off countries simply jumped at the idea and came long distances to attend the Congress. Many of the delegates from South America and South Africa had to raise subscriptions to which even the poor contributed to enable them to come to Brussels. This was an impressive fact and it naturally made one think that whatever the future of the organisation which the Brussels Congress has created might be, some such international organisation is bound to come in the near future.

For an Indian it was exceedingly interesting to meet the various types of humanity represented in the Congress. The Chinese were, most of them, very young and full of energy and enthusiasm. The traditional notion of the placid and tranquil Chinese received a rude shock and one was confronted with a group of persons, apparently not remarkably able, but with a great deal of driving force, and a desire to fill the picture. China of course, owing to circumstances, did fill the picture but before the Congress was over people were rather tired of listening to Chinese orations, which were not remarkable for their lucidity. I suppose the Chinese representatives were the natural products of a revolution and I was led regretfully to wish that we in India might also develop some of this energy and driving force, at the expense if need be of some of our intellectuality.

The Indonesians, chiefly from Java, were even more interesting. They were Moslems but even their names were partly derived from Sanskrit. Their customs, they told us, were still largely Hindu in origin, and many of them bore a striking resemblance to the higher caste Hindus. There are many Buddhists in Indonesia and we were glad to find that the relations between the Moslems and the Buddhists were uniformly good and both of them worked together for the independence of their country.

The negroes present varied from the inkiest black to every shade of brown. There were able men among them, full of eloquence and energy, but they all bore traces of the long martyrdom which their race had suffered, more perhaps than any other people, and there was a want of hope in the dark future which faces them. The Arabs from

10. The distinguished physicist.

Syria and North Africa were very different—typical fighting men, who understood independence and fighting for it and little else, and were wholly untainted with the slave mentality of more intellectual races.

The people from Latin America, dark as the northern Indian, were again a different and interesting type. Most of us, specially from Asia, were wholly ignorant of the problems of South America, and of how the rising imperialism of the United States, with its tremendous resources and its immunity from outside attack, is gradually taking a stranglehold of Central and South America. But we are not likely to remain ignorant much longer for the great problem of the near future will be American imperialism, even more than British imperialism. Or it may be, and all indications point to it, that the two will join together to create a powerful Anglo-Saxon bloc to dominate the world.

It was this bogey of the United States and the fear that they might not be able to stand up against them unaided, that drove them to seek for help from outside. So far the weakness of Latin America has been the want of unity. Each State quarrels with the other and often within the States there is also disunion, usually fomented by the United States. An interesting and instructive outcome of the Brussels Congress was the achievement of unity between the delegates of the various South American States. This unity was on paper only but it is probably the herald of a closer union of the States against their bullying neighbour of the North.

The South African Trade Union Congress of white workers sent a representative and so also did the Natal Native Council—a negro organisation. In these days of race hatred in South Africa and the ill-treatment of Indians it was pleasing to hear the representative of the White workers giving expression to the most advanced opinions on the equality of races and of workers of all races. The negro and the white man jointly represented South African workers and they worked together in the Congress.

The idea of holding an International Congress at Brussels apparently originated with a small group in Berlin. This group was probably in touch with Soviet Russia and the Russians approved of the idea. But the Russians kept themselves severely aloof from the Congress because they thought that too close an association might frighten away many people. Thus there was no representative from any Russian organisation and indeed Russia was conspicuous by its very absence. But there can be no doubt that there were very many sympathisers with Soviet Russia present and a number of professed communists. The Congress was entirely in keeping with Russia's present policy of encouraging and supporting every form of nationalism and indeed every other force which can help them to break imperialism, specially British

imperialism. Russia has toned down her purely communistic propaganda in order to lay greater stress on the common fight against imperialism. Probably it is felt that once this arch enemy is removed the orientation of the world along communistic lines will be easier.

So Russia did not overtly help the Congress in any way. I do not think that any money even was paid by her for the expenses of the Congress. The idea, once started, was welcomed by the Chinese and by the Mexicans, both of whom subscribed handsomely to the funds of the Congress. Other subscriptions were also raised from workers' organisations. The support of two Governments—Canton and Mexico—and a number of organisations in those and other countries laid the foundations of the Congress and a general appeal was then issued which met with a very satisfactory response. The decision of the Indian National Congress to send a representative was greatly welcomed by the organisers, as a Congress against imperialism without India, the typical example of imperialist exploitation, would have been a very incomplete affair. The chief planks of the Congress as the organisers wrote to me at the time, were going to be China and India, and partly Mexico. Mexico was to take the lead in the consolidation of Latin America against the United States, and India and China were to be the battle fronts against British imperialism.

There were many difficulties to be faced by the organisers. Minor difficulties related to the attitude of the Belgian Government. These were ultimately overcome and the Congress was held in a fine old palace of Brussels, the property of the Government. There was a beautiful hall and ante-chambers and marble staircases. The Belgian Government also gave every facility in giving visas to delegates.

A major difficulty was an attack by an official of the Second International<sup>11</sup>, who stated that the Congress was engineered by the Third International<sup>12</sup> and some disgruntled persons should be boycotted. The Second International, as is well known, is the International Organisation of Labour which has its headquarters in Amsterdam and which existed before the war. The Third International is the Soviet one with its headquarters in Moscow. Organized Labour in England, Germany and some other countries belongs to the Second International. I believe the Indian trade unions have also recently become affiliated to it. There is bitter warfare between the two Internationals although constituent groups of them are friendly to each other. The British

11. It was founded in Paris in 1889. Most European socialist parties, including the German and Russian Social Democratic Parties, were affiliated to it.

12. The Communist International, known as the Comintern or Third International, was founded in Moscow in 1919. It was dissolved in 1943.

Miners' Federation, for instance, is very friendly to the Third International, and British Labour has been trying for some time to bring about a rapprochement between the two Internationals, but so far without success. There is not a very great deal of difference between the two — or rather it is more correct to say that there is not much difference between the left wing of the Second International and the Third International. The great objection raised to the latter is that it takes its orders from Moscow and does not leave any liberty to the various trade unions belonging to it.

The attack of the official of the Second International and some other circumstances created an unpleasant situation and it was at one time feared that British Labour as well as some other important trade unions would keep away. They were prevailed upon however to come, and I think that one of the many reasons which induced some of them to come was the knowledge that the Indian Congress would be officially represented.

The Brussels Congress was thus, so far as its delegates were concerned, by no means purely communist. There were important labour leaders who have openly opposed communism and the Third International. But the organisers were certainly communists or people having full sympathy with Russia. There was also a strong undercurrent of sympathy with Russia among the delegates. As one of the negro delegates from Africa put it, his people did not know much about communism but they felt that Soviet Russia brought a message of hope to the downtrodden and oppressed. Every reference to Russia was cheered.

The Congress began its public sessions on the 10th February. But preliminary informal meetings of such delegates as had arrived were held on the 7th and 8th February. I arrived in Brussels on the evening of the 6th and took part in all the informal meetings. On the 9th representatives of the press were invited and the organisers and a few delegates representing different countries made statements to them about the Congress and what they expected it to do. I enclose a copy of the statement I made on that occasion.

I was a member of the Presidium — the Presiding Committee or Subjects Committee of the Congress. This used to meet daily before the Congress and decide on the agenda for the day. I enclose a copy of the general agenda from which you will notice that there were six main divisions of the work. General speeches were delivered by prominent people under each head and special resolutions were usually tacked on to them. On the first day I was one of the persons who delivered the opening addresses. The official languages of the Congress were French, English and German. Every speech had to be

given or translated into at least French and English and sometimes German also. Among the other languages used were Arabic and Chinese. An attempt to speak in Hebrew was stopped as apparently no one besides the speaker understood the language. The translation work was good and rapid and the general arrangements for taking down verbatim reports of speeches and typing copies in three languages were also good. But the translations are not always good and you must remember this fact when you read the proceedings of the Congress.

Each session of the Congress usually had a different President, supported by two others on either side of him. Most of the heads of delegations had thus a chance of presiding, and on one occasion I was the President. The more or less permanent President of the Presidium and the Congress was Edo Fimmen, a big labour leader of Holland and Secretary of the International Transport Workers.

The Indians were specially interested in four resolutions<sup>13</sup>. The first one of these (marked A) was drafted by us and as you will notice is quite a simple one. The second one (B) was a joint declaration on behalf of the Indian and Chinese delegates and really formed a kind of introduction to the other resolutions. The third (C) was a signed declaration of the British, Indian and Chinese delegates and is the most important and effective resolution of the three. We suggested to the British delegates that as their country was the chief sinner both in regard to India and China it was up to them to state what they proposed doing. Some of them thereupon produced a draft. We accepted the draft in its entirety except for one verbal change. Subsequent British arrivals objected to the form of clause I of the first part which stated, as drafted by the English delegates, that they would "fight for the severance of the British connection wherever such national forces so desire". To satisfy the objectors we suggested the substitution of "complete independence" for the "severance of the British connection" and this was accepted by them. So far as we were concerned the change made no difference.

You will notice that this resolution — the chief merit of which is that it is entirely a British production and was moved and supported by Britishers — lays down a strong line of action even in regard to India. Apart from the declaration in clause (1) that they would "fight for the complete independence" etc., clause (3) declares that they would vote against all military credits and clause (4) that they would carry on anti-imperialist propaganda even among the soldiery. In clause (2)

13. Not included here.

of part 2 of the resolution direct action and strikes are recommended to prevent movements of munitions and troops to India and China.

This resolution was signed by Lansbury, M.P.; Beckett, M.P.; Fenne Brockway, Secretary, I.L.P.; Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.; Bridgeman; Rust<sup>14</sup>; McManus; Pollitt; Davies of the Miners' Federation and some other British delegates. Liau<sup>15</sup> signed it on behalf of the Chinese and I signed on behalf of the Indians. The resolution was really meant to bind the British signatories who are affected most by it but to some extent it binds me as the Indian signatory also. I trust the resolution will have a good effect in India in lessening the extraordinary mentality which clings on to the British connection in spite of everything, and specially in regard to the army of occupation in India. So far as I am aware little has been said in India on this subject and the presence of a foreign army of occupation is taken for granted. In the Brussels Congress we laid special stress on this fact and whenever objection was taken to the despatch of troops to China we pointed out that we had to put up with foreign troops all the time and fresh contingents were continually being sent.

This resolution was sent by cable — at great cost — to the President of the Indian Congress and to the National Government of Canton. I hope the Congress will approve of this resolution and will adopt it if necessary with some minor changes. It would largely fit in with the policy of the Swaraj party in the Councils and would give a welcome lead to the country in regard to outside action.

The fourth resolution in which the Indian delegates were interested related to Mesopotamia. We felt that as no delegate from Mesopotamia was present and as Indian troops had conquered and were at present occupying Mesopotamia, and large numbers of Indian clerks and employees were taking part in the exploitation of the country, it was up to us to demand the recall of the army of occupation and to say that we did not wish to be a party to this imperialist adventure, even though we may profit a little from the drippings of British exploitation. I regret I have no copy of this resolution with me at present. It will be sent to you later with the full record of the proceedings of the Congress.

There were many other resolutions, copies of some of which I am sending you. Many others could not be considered for lack of time. Some delegates — notably those from Korea and Persia — were considerably put out as nothing was done about their countries. A number of enormous manifestos were rushed through the Congress at the

14. William Rust (1903-1949); a leading British Communist.

15. H. Liau, representative of the Kuomintang.

last moment when there was no time to consider them. One of these, called the Congress Manifesto, a copy of which I enclose, is more or less Marxian and, although personally I have no very great objection to it, the manner of its being rushed through was objectionable.

Finally, a permanent organisation was formed. The Presidium with some alterations was made into the General Council of the League. I enclose a list of this General Council. You will notice that there are five Honorary Presidents and in order to show honour to India they have made me one of these five. The others are Einstein, Romain Rolland, Madame Sun Yat Sen<sup>16</sup> and Lansbury. The General Council has an executive committee of 9 with four substitute members, who can always attend and can vote when the others are absent. It was proposed to have me as one of the secretaries but I pointed out that this was absurd as I could not even attend meetings from India. I was not made secretary but in spite of the same objection I was made a member of the Executive Committee. There are three secretaries, a Hungarian, Gibarti, who is a very capable linguist and worker and who has been so far in charge of the organisation; Liau, a Chinaman; and Senghor,<sup>17</sup> a full-blooded negro from the French African colonies but resident in Paris. Lansbury is to be chairman of the committee and Edo Fimmen the vice-chairman. The office will be in Paris but for some months it will continue in Berlin.

Under the constitution as adopted, the organisations that sent delegates might be considered as constituent or affiliated bodies unless they do not desire this. The Indian Congress can thus for the present be considered as an associated body. It will be for the Working Committee to decide this question. Personally I hope that the committee will approve of the association. The advantages are great and the disadvantages inconsiderable. Among the advantages are the opportunities to keep in touch with many Asiatic and other countries with problems not dissimilar to ours, and the use of the League as a very efficient means of propaganda and publicity. There is no doubt that the League can and intends to carry on propaganda on a big scale. We have discussed the question of foreign propaganda for a long time in the Indian Congress but for various obvious reasons nothing much has

16. Born in 1890, Soong Ching-Ling married the Chinese revolutionary and leader Sun Yat Sen in 1915. After his death in 1925, she worked with Chiang Kai Shek and the Kuomintang, but her sympathies were with the Chinese Communists and she was elected Vice-Chairman of the Central People's Government in 1949.
17. Lamine Senghor was Chairman of the militant *Ligue pour la Défence de la Race Noire*.

been done or could be done. Modern publicity and propaganda require vast sums of money which we certainly could not spare. But if we can take advantage of another organisation to do this work for us without our spending much money or energy over it, there seems to be no reason why we should not avail ourselves of it. There is another consideration to be borne in mind. Many speakers at the Brussels Congress spoke disparagingly of the League of Nations and called it a League of Governments. They referred rather grandiloquently to their Congress as the true League of Nations or Peoples. This is, for the present at least, an exaggerated description but there is a germ of truth in it and it is in the interest of the Indian Congress to be associated with an organisation which might play a big role in the future.

The disadvantages, as far as I can see, might be the socialist character of the League and the possibility that Russian foreign policy might influence it. The socialist tendencies of the League are very marked although individual members who were not socialists were present. The whole basis of the League is that imperialism and capitalism go hand in hand and back up each other and neither of them will disappear till both are put down. An endeavour is therefore made to join the forces against imperialism and capitalism and by this coordination to strengthen the two. So far nationalism of a narrow variety has been the main pillar of capitalism and imperialism in the imperialist countries. The example of Poland shows us that even in an oppressed country the achievement of political freedom results in driving nationalism into the imperialistic and capitalistic fold. The labour movements in the West are therefore developing along lines opposed to this narrow nationalism and to be called a nationalist is almost a term of reproach in labour circles. Almost to a man, the members of the labour organisations are socialists. The problem in oppressed countries is somewhat different and nationalism automatically and rightly takes precedence of all other sentiments. This is recognised even by socialists but they point out that in such countries nationalism might be given a broader basis more in consonance with the tendencies of the age; that it might derive its strength from and work specially for the masses, the peasants and the other workers. Personally, I agree with this contention because I accept in its fundamentals the socialist theory of the State. I do not know however how far the Indian Congress would be prepared to identify itself with socialism. I may point out however that the association of the Indian Congress with the League against Imperialism does not mean the adoption by the Congress of a socialist programme. The Congress is and remains entirely free to work along such lines as it considers best suited for the country.

There is a growing belief in labour circles in England and the rest of Europe that the exploitation of a subject people does not benefit greatly the labouring classes of the country which exploits. The party that benefits is the capitalist and if the capitalist was removed there would be very few causes of friction between the workers of various countries. How far this is correct it is difficult to say, but there is certainly some truth in it. It is conceivable of course that two socialist countries may develop imperialist tendencies and might attempt to exploit each other or a third. But for the present, advanced labour opinion is distinctly against the exploitation of another country as it believes that it ultimately results in a reduction of their own wages in the home country and in the lowering of their standard of life. Mr. Saklatvala<sup>18</sup> I notice has been criticising the boycott of Lancashire goods in India on the ground that this injures their comrades in Lancashire. This is an example of a possible conflict between our nationalistic interests and the interests of the workers outside. I do not think however that Mr. Saklatvala has given expression to any considerable body of opinion. I have met even communists who have criticised his statement and socialists generally I believe recognise the right of a subject country to boycott. It is easy enough of course to put Saklatvala's point of view before the British worker and to get him to give an enthusiastic assent. The case of China is very much to the point. In China the boycott of foreign goods has been reduced to a fine art and the strength of China today is this power of economic boycott which has nearly ruined Hongkong and has brought the British almost to their knees. But no word of protest is raised by British labour against this policy of boycott and indeed the support which British labour has given and is giving to China in the present crisis is remarkable.

I would therefore submit to the Working Committee that it is highly desirable for the Indian Congress to associate itself with the League against Imperialism, thereby of course in no way limiting its freedom

18. Shapurji Saklatvala (1874-1936); was a nephew of Jamshetjee Tata, founder of the industrial house of Tata, which he joined after his education in England. He spent three years in the jungles, exploring for iron, coal and limestone. His work helped in the establishment of the Tata Iron and Steel Works. From 1905 to 1925 he was in London as Tata's representative, and took an active part in the life of the Indian community there. Becoming interested in the Labour movement, he ultimately became a member of the British Communist Party. A brilliant orator, he was arrested for one of his speeches and imprisoned for a few weeks in 1922, and again in 1924. He was returned to Parliament in 1924 from North Battersea and was an M.P. until 1929. He visited India in 1927.

of action in India or elsewhere. In case the Working Committee so decides it will be proper for it to contribute to the funds of the League. The constitution of the League is vague on this point and merely says that each constituent organisation should contribute in accordance with its strength of membership and financial position. I would suggest that a first contribution of £100 be made and more might be sent later. Considering the activities of the League and the large amount required by it, this sum is a small one and might be augmented in the course of the year. I believe that the Congress has set aside Rs. 5,000 for foreign propaganda. The £100 might come out of this sum.

I stated above, in mentioning the disadvantages of our associating with the League, that Russian policy might influence it, but I forgot to deal with this question in its proper place. The Russians have an extraordinary capacity for propaganda and to this they add a really surprising knowledge of the internal conditions of other countries. I have not met any Russian myself, apart from some *emigres* and exiles, but the knowledge I have gathered from indirect sources about their activities and their intimate knowledge of external politics has amazed me. The British politician whose job it is to know thoroughly the countries he rules probably knows far less about them than the Russian experts. It is thus probable that the Russians will try to utilise the League to further their own ends. Personally I have the strongest objection to being led by the nose by the Russians or by anybody else. But I do not think there is much danger of this so far as we are concerned. We are so accustomed to being led by the British, in spite of what we may imagine, that it will take a long time for us to get out of the habit. And to break this British tradition will be a definite gain and once we have regained our mental equilibrium it will be up to us to decide what we should do. Apart from this, even if the Russians try to utilise the League they will do so very cautiously and on more or less unobjectionable lines. The presence of Lansbury as chairman and some others in the executive committee shows that it is not a one-sided affair. I do not see why, under these circumstances, we should not cooperate with men representing the Russian viewpoint. The mere fact that English politicians are never tired of showing that the Russians are monsters need not frighten us or prevent us from associating with them where it is manifestly to our advantage to do so. In so far as we are up against British imperialism we must recognise that Soviet Russia is also very much against it.

An interesting feature of the Brussels Congress was the strong desire of the delegates from Asia that the beginnings should be made of some Asiatic federation. This was not due to any special feeling against

Europe or America but to a drawing together of the Asiatic elements and a recognition of a common bond uniting them. This was specially noticeable in the delegates from the smaller countries : Indonesia, Korea, Persia, Syria and Egypt (which might be considered an Asiatic country for this purpose). The organisers of the Congress were rather suspicious of this Asiatic spirit and did not want to encourage it, partly because they felt that it might lead to the formation of another organisation like theirs. The Asiatic delegates met once and talked for two or three hours but nothing came of it. But the desire to do something remained. I could not understand how an effective Asiatic organisation could be built up. Various parts of Asia are more inaccessible to each other than they are to Europe and at the present moment Europe is the best meeting ground for different Asiatic nationalities. As there was much feeling in the matter, specially among the delegates whose resolutions had not been considered by the Congress owing to lack of time, I arranged a meeting of a selected number of delegates from countries in Asia and from Egypt. We decided that it was premature to talk of any special Asiatic organisation and that we might concentrate for the present at least on strengthening the new League against Imperialism, which in effect would largely serve our purpose. At the same time it was highly desirable for various Asiatic countries and their national organisations to develop contacts and to remain in touch with each other. We exchanged the addresses of our organisations and decided that we should try to send each other our publications and reports. Further, that whenever possible we should try to visit the other countries and put ourselves in touch with the national organisation there. The best occasion for such visits would be when the national organisation has its annual or periodical Congress or meeting. Whenever this takes place invitations should be issued by the organisation holding the Congress to the other national organisations and such of them as are able to do so could send fraternal delegates. Further, we appointed a committee of four with its seat in Paris to cooperate with the League against Imperialism in regard to Asiatic matters, and specially to look after the interests of such countries, like Korea, Persia etc., which have no special organisation there to watch their interests.

I am sending separately some of the addresses of national organisations of Asiatic countries. I trust that the A.I.C.C. office will get into touch with them and send all our Congress publications and reports. Also that they will be invited to send fraternal delegates to the next Congress. It will perhaps be desirable for the A.I.C.C. to have a special department dealing with foreign affairs in charge of a

person who is acquainted with one other foreign language (French or German) besides English. This department could keep in touch with the League against Imperialism and with the national and workers' organisations in Asia and elsewhere. Our contact with the rest of the world is bound to increase and it is neither possible nor desirable for us to try to maintain our isolation. Even isolation if it was complete might have some advantages but we are now connected with the outside world practically through England and the English language only and our ideas of the world naturally tend to become lopsided and perverted. Quite apart from the desirability of our cultivating relations with other countries, it is necessary for us to train a body of young men with some knowledge of the present world and the forces that are shaping the future. A Congress department of foreign affairs and occasional visits paid by Indians to foreign countries, not as tourists but as sympathetic students, would go some way to train such a body of men.

I shall now deal with the present crisis in China and as to what we can do in regard to it. The news that reaches India about the Chinese struggle comes almost entirely through British official or semi-official agencies and the real truth seldom appears in the Indian papers. As England is intimately involved in the present crisis, it can easily be imagined that no chance is missed to run down the national movement here. The importance of the Chinese struggle cannot be over-estimated. It is not merely the attempt of an oppressed nation to regain its independence. It is that of course, but the methods employed have made it into a direct attack on the capitalist system and thus on the very foundations of the present system in vogue in almost every country except Soviet Russia. A victory for the Chinese means the creation of a great Soviet republic in the East closely allied with Russia and together with it gradually dominating the whole of Asia and Europe. This does not mean that the Chinese republic will be fashioned wholly on the lines laid down by Marx. Even Soviet Russia, owing to the pressure of the peasantry, has had to give up part of its communism, and in China where the small peasant is the deciding factor, the departure from pure communism will be all the greater. But in essentials and in their hostility to British and other imperialism, Russia and China will stand together. Japan must of necessity gravitate to this bloc. Indeed there is no lack of signs that Japan is trying to gain the goodwill of China. She has deliberately dissociated herself from the action that England is taking. It is obvious that such a combination threatens the very existence of the British Empire and directly affects the future of India. It is exceedingly doubtful if England even with

the aid of other European countries can do much injury to this great continental block. What is more likely is that England in order to save herself from extinction will become a satellite of the United States and incite the imperialism and capitalism of America to fight by her side.

It is the knowledge of this inherently weak position that has been the governing factor in British diplomacy of late. Today even in case of war England cannot do very great injury to China, at any rate she cannot break up the revolution. She can hold on to the ports and to the coastline and the Chinese can hold on to the interior for any length of time and bring about the complete ruin of British trade in China. But probably if there was war it would not be confined to Chinese territories or waters. It might spread to Russia. It is stated that the British Government has decided to break off all relations with Soviet Russia. If this happens it may gradually lead to war with Russia and that again may lead to a world war. It is well known that Poland is making feverish preparations for war against Russia. I do not think that any country really wants war at present but war has a habit of coming uninvited and sometimes unannounced. It has been notorious amongst politicians in Europe that preparations are going on for a great war about five years hence. This period of 5 years is fixed because the Singapore base will be ready about that time and England will be in a favourable position to fight in the Far East. It is believed that British military policy in India is also based on the preparation for a war about that time. In any war between Russia and England the North-West Frontier of India will naturally be the principal battle ground. I have gathered from newspapers and other sources that the Government of India is encouraging the import of motor lorries and trucks and I have an idea that the duty on them was removed or greatly reduced. These trucks form an essential feature of transport in warfare now, specially as railways cannot be wholly relied on in these days of strikes. The general strike in England was broken by means of motor transports. I understand that motor lorries go regularly now from Karachi to Peshawar, but I am not sure of this. Another feature of English policy in India appears to be to make India a self-sufficient country in case of war, capable of producing munitions and the other paraphernalia of war. Under the guise of protecting and encouraging Indian industries they are really encouraging only such industries as will help them in war time. With the battle fronts in India and China, England will be too far away to provide materials. These will have to come from Singapore and India. For this purpose probably attempts will be made to have alliances between British and Indian capitalists so

that in time of need the latter might aid the former. The encouragement given to civil aviation in India is also part of the same war policy.

Thus England might prefer to have a war 4 or 5 years later. But on the other hand there is the fear of China being much stronger than it is now. Apparently also Russia is not prepared for war now and so England might decide on an earlier challenge. I cannot prophesy what will happen but I want to place the various possibilities before you. It is quite possible that but for organised Labour in England the country might already have drifted into war, gifted as it is with one of the most stupid and blatantly pompous governments in history. The leaders of labour — MacDonald,<sup>19</sup> Thomas,<sup>20</sup> etc. — were very moderate and apologetic over the Chinese question, but the rank and file of Labour rose in an extraordinary way and forced their timid and halting leaders to adopt a stiffer attitude. There have been innumerable demonstrations in England against war in China and against the despatch of troops. Albert Hall had a tremendous meeting and a vast crowd gathered in Trafalgar Square. Leaflets have been distributed to the troops who were leaving for China. In fact it has been freely asserted that the Government did not trust the ordinary regiments and sent only the aristocratic regiments like the Guards. The policy of the I.L.P. is "to prepare the workers for organised mass resistance by refusal of war service, including the manufacture and transport of munitions, should the calamity of an outbreak of hostilities occur."

Whatever may be the outcome in China — peace or war — it is clear that India will be deeply affected thereby, far more even than by the war of 1914-18. The Congress must therefore take cognisance of the forces and policies that are shaping the future of the world and lay down its own policy and programme accordingly. We cannot remain aloof from them; else our best laid plans will break down and we will find ourselves suddenly faced with crises for which we are wholly unprepared or even stampeded into a war for the support of the very system against which we are contending. There does not appear to be — I speak with all deference and with insufficient knowledge — a sufficient

19. Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937); first Labour Prime Minister of Britain 1923-24 and 1929-31, when he resigned to head a National Government. He was greatly interested in India, which he visited and then wrote a book called *The Awakening of India*. Invited to preside over a session of the Indian National Congress, he was obliged by his wife's illness to decline.
20. James Henry Thomas (1874-1949); organiser of the British railwaymen's trade union and member of the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929-31. He was one of the Labour leaders who agreed to serve in the National Government of 1931, but resigned in 1936 because he was held responsible for leakage of budget secrets.

appreciation of the significance of the Chinese struggle, and the protests that have so far been made in India either by the Working Committee or by the press appear to lack conviction and strength. We are far more deeply concerned with the issue in China than British Labour is and yet we have not done an infinitesimal part of what the latter has done and is doing. The Secretary of the I.L.P. asked me some days ago why India was so quiescent in the matter and said that strong agitation in India would strengthen their hands tremendously. All I could say was that perhaps the news agencies were not sending us reports of what was happening in India.

It seems to me that India must take up a strong attitude, at least as strong as that of British Labour, not merely because it is right for us to do so but because it is manifestly in our interest. A strong agitation would divert attention from some of our internal squabbles and produce among the masses, and to a certain extent even in the Indian army, the mentality of resistance which we had for a brief spell during the height of the noncooperation movement.

I had many talks with Chinese delegates in Brussels. Faced as they were with a critical situation, they naturally wanted immediate action and were intolerant of delay. I pointed out to them that however much we might sympathise with them our internal difficulties prevented us from doing much at present. We would try to do our best now but what was more important was to lay the foundations of future cooperation. The joint declaration of the British, Indian and Chinese delegates lays down some definite lines of action. I do not know how far it is practicable to act along these lines in India at present. But if the lines are approved, considerable publicity might be given to them and mass opinion gradually educated.

The Chinese delegates were very keen on the Canton Government sending a permanent representative to India and the Indian National Congress sending a similar representative to Canton or Hankau. I agreed with them about the desirability of the proposal and said that I would place it before the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress with my strong recommendation. But I pointed out that there may be many difficulties in the way of the I.N.C. and they may not be able to send such a representative. A representative from the Canton Government to India would of course be warmly welcomed.

Some of the immediate steps that were agreed upon were as follows:—

1. The Chinese should open an Information Bureau at some place in India, preferably in Calcutta where there is a large colony of Chinese and supply the fullest information to the press and politicians of India on Chinese questions. This Bureau to be under the charge of a com-

petent person who can, if necessity arises, confer with Indian leaders on Chinese questions.

2. As the opening of the Bureau will take a little time, immediate steps should be taken to send continuous information on Chinese questions to the Indian press and national organisations from a Chinese Information Bureau in Europe, preferably the London one.

3. A Chinese representative to be stationed in India. The head of the Information Bureau if he is competent enough might be such a representative.

4. As soon as feasible, Chinese representatives might visit India and make a tour of India to enlighten public opinion. I told them that I would suggest to the Congress in India to send an invitation and as a matter of fact I sent a cable to this effect to Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar from Brussels.

5. The Kuo Min Tang party in China might invite representatives of the Indian National Congress to visit China. I hoped that the Congress would be able to send one or two persons but I pointed out that it was quite possible that the Government may not issue passports. Even if Government prevented our representatives from leaving India it would have a good effect.

6. Similarly it was suggested that the Trade Union Congress in China might invite representatives of the Indian trade union movement to China. I told the Chinese however that apart from other difficulties there was an additional one — the fact that most of the leaders of labour in India are very moderate.

I was told that the Chinese are planning to hold a big workers' Congress in Canton on May 1, 1927 and they specially wanted representatives of the I.N.C. and the Indian trade unions to attend this. Probably invitations for this Congress will be issued to you soon. I hope it will be possible for you to send a representative.

7. Representatives of the Kuo Min Tang party might be invited to attend the next sessions of the I.N.C.

8. The Chinese delegates were very desirous of arranging a conference between Indian and Chinese representatives in the near future — within the next three or four months. Such a conference can either take place in China, or in India, or in Europe. I pointed out that if Chinese representatives came to India there would obviously be no difficulty in arranging a conference. In China or Europe it would be far more difficult as we may not be able to send our people. Perhaps

if competent men could be sent to attend the workers' congress at Canton on May 1 they might be able to meet representative Chinese there. Or if suitable Indians happened to come to Europe next summer, some meeting could be arranged.

9. The Chinese delegates were also keen on some young Indians going to China for purposes of study and to develop contacts with the Chinese and their national movement. They said that the Indians would be very welcome and every facility would be given to them. I told them that it was not likely that many Indians would be able to go to China but I would place their proposal before the Indian leaders.

Meanwhile a continuous agitation should be carried on in India for the recall of Indian troops from China and on the duty of Indian soldiers not to fight their brethren in China. If the situation develops favourably there might be possibilities of mass action but nothing definite could be said about this.

I am afraid I have written a very long report, which will try the patience of the members of the Working Committee. But I preferred to be long and explicit, even at the expense of the reader's boredom, rather than short and perhaps misleading. The international situation changes rapidly and it is quite possible that by the time this note reaches India, important and far-reaching developments might have taken place. The British position is weak and if complications arise it is highly likely that some sops will be thrown out to India to soothe public opinion. It is freely rumoured in London that the Bengal Ordnance prisoners will be released and the appointment of the Statutory Commission<sup>21</sup> in the course of the year announced. It is also unhappily possible--though I earnestly trust that it will not happen--that owing to our internal weaknesses we shall accept almost anything as a compromise. But if it is realised that relatively and potentially we are not weak, whilst England is daily losing ground in spite of her apparent strength, we might perhaps adopt a stiffer and more uncompromising attitude. A suitable settlement can only come when we are strong and not in our moment of weakness. We have but to hold out and refuse to have any dealings with the spirit of compromise, born of weariness, and concentrate on the building up of strength.

I hope the Working Committee will send me full directions on the various points raised in this report. It is possible that I may have to attend one or more meetings of the executive committee of the League against Imperialism before I return to India. It is also possible that

21. Better known as the Simon Commission, its purpose was to consider the working of the Reforms of 1919.

I may again come in touch with the Chinese and other people. It is therefore necessary that I should know exactly how the Working Committee feels in regard to these matters, and what action, if any, it would like me to take.

I am sending with this report copies of various resolutions and manifestos of the Brussels Congress. I hope to send soon a full report of the proceedings.

Montana

Jawaharlal Nehru  
February 19, 1927

### 27. On the Indian Situation<sup>1</sup>

I want our country to gain complete swaraj, and this should be our aim till we succeed. I will probably not change my opinion, whatever be the state of my country. I thought, and I still think, that often our leaders forget this, and therefore I am writing to you about it.

Swaraj means two things : the external relations of our country and the internal organisation. In external affairs our country should have full freedom to do what it likes, to sign treaties or develop special relations with any country. If our country wishes to have any special relationship with England, she may. If she thinks it proper to have such relations with China or any other country, she should be free to do so. Thus all the rights that an independent country enjoys in this respect, should be those of our country also. To say even now that we shall always be associated with England, as a Dominion or in some other form, seems to me inappropriate, for it lessens our freedom of choice in the future. I do not want our country to be a victim of that narrow nationalism which is now to be found in almost all the countries of Europe and America. I hope that after gaining freedom we shall use our energy for extending peace in the world.

1. Extracts from a letter written by Jawaharlal from Montana and published in *Aaj*, 2 March 1927. Original in Hindi.

This letter received wide notice in India and was generally regarded as implied criticism of Motilal Nehru.

By internal independence I mean that our freedom should benefit the majority of our people, that is, the peasants and workers. I do not want that swaraj in which a few rich people benefit or a few Indians get even higher positions and the lot of the crores of peasants and poor people does not improve.

I had written to you earlier also that in my opinion there should be an extremist group in the Congress. I did not by that mean the formation of a new party to compete with others. I had emphasised that there should be no attempt to increase the number of parties. But what I was afraid of was that in the Congress or in the Swaraj Party, there would always be some men who would try to pull us back. It is but natural that in big parties there should be all sorts of people, extremists and moderates, impatient and slow. To stop this pulling us back there should be some pressure from the other direction as well. If those persons who agree with this view could consult together and take the right steps, the danger of our back-sliding could be avoided. This will also add to the strength of our leaders and they could forge ahead with confidence. It does not mean opposing the existing parties, excepting those that go against our principles. Apart from the Congress, the Swaraj Party is the only leading group at present. Even those in that party, who think it proper, can join the extremist group and help their party to go ahead.

## 28. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Clinique Stephani,  
Montana s/Sierre,  
Switzerland

7.3.27

My dear Rangaswami,

I enclose another note for the Working Committee. I hope you will have copies sent to the members. My principal object in sending these notes is not only to keep the Working Committee in touch with developments but to divert the attention of the members for a while at least from Hindu-Muslim riots and murders. I think they ought to thank me for this little diversion !

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29(62-A)/1927, Part II, p. 131. N.M.M.L.

I do not know where you are likely to be when this reaches India. I am sending it to Madras. But I am also writing separately and shortly to you to Delhi.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

NOTE FOR THE WORKING COMMITTEE

As the committee might be interested in further developments in the work of the League against Imperialism, I am writing this additional note. The Executive Committee of the League will meet soon to decide on definite lines of action. It is clear that the League has already given a great impetus to various activities in different countries. I had an opportunity last week of meeting again the secretary of the League. I have been discussing the future programmes and I have also been in correspondence with various members of the committee.

The Brussels Congress has attracted considerable attention and is recognised to have been a very significant affair. In Germany great publicity was given to it by all the papers, perhaps because they are interested in anything which goes against the imperialist powers, Germany for the present at least not being one of them. In France there was less of press publicity, but political correspondents gave importance to the Congress. In England the press has been silent, except for some appreciative passages in the Labour organs. Lansbury's Weekly gave a good deal of space to it. The communist press has welcomed the Congress but has criticised it as being moderate. I am told that I have been described in it as the famed bourgeois representative of the Indian National Congress—a very correct description. A study of these press comments gives one a fairly accurate idea of the Brussels Congress and the League. It is not a communist affair, though it has strong labour and socialist leanings and it welcomes communists and non-communists alike. The right wing of the British Labour Party is fighting shy of it and is trying to prevent the left wing from identifying itself too closely with it. This is natural for the right wing has a purely imperialist outlook and cannot look with favour on anything which is really opposed to British imperialism.

The principal Egyptian delegate to the Brussels Congress was Hafiz Ramadan Bey<sup>2</sup>, the leader of the Egyptian National Party and a leading advocate of Cairo. This party is slightly more radical than Zaglul

2. Mohamed Hafiz Ramadan Bey was a member of the General Council of the League against Imperialism in 1928.

Pasha's<sup>3</sup> old party which is gradually declining in strength although Zaglul is himself very popular. There is no real opposition between the two parties. Zaglul is getting very old and much cannot be expected from him. Hafiz Ramadan is supposed to be the coming man in Egypt. He has promised to work on behalf of the League against Imperialism in Egypt and he proposes to start a branch of the League there which will have representatives of all the national parties and labour organisations in Egypt. He further proposes to give an annual sum of £500 on behalf of his party to the League. I understand that Zaglul is himself very interested in the League.

Steps are being taken to form a branch of the League representing the Arab countries. Probably the headquarters will be Palestine as Syria is in actual revolt. Mazhar El-Bakri, a Syrian notable and leader, is in charge of this. H. M. Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari probably remember El-Bakri. He told me that he had met them in Palestine or Syria. This branch will probably have representatives from Iraq also.

Mexico is taking the lead in organising the League in Latin America and it is probable that a Congress of representatives from Latin America will be held before long in Chicago or somewhere else in the U.S.A., the idea of holding it in the U.S.A. being to storm the citadel of American imperialism. Funds have been promised for work in Latin America. The Nicaragua problem<sup>4</sup> will be made the chief issue.

A branch will probably be started in the U.S.A. also. Funds for use in the U.S.A. have been promised.

The problems of the negroes in the U.S.A. and those in Africa are very different and the two branches of the race have hardly been in touch in the past. Efforts, which are likely to succeed, are being made under the auspices of the League to bring them together and make them act together.

The South African delegates have undertaken to form a branch of the League in South Africa in collaboration with the advanced wing of the white workers, the negro workers, the Negro Congress and the South African Indian Congress. This branch will specially work against all colour legislation and discrimination. So far there has not been much cooperation between these different organisations and each one of them has had to fight its battle singly. The white workers have

3. Saad Zaghlul Pasha (1850-1927); Egyptian Nationalist leader; suffered both arrest (1882) and exile (1919) for his attempts to end foreign domination in Egypt; in 1919, founded the Wafd Party.
4. Nicaragua, of interest to the United States because of her plans to construct a canal across the Isthmus, was occupied by U.S. marines for a long period.

of course not only not helped but have been the partisans of the colour discrimination policy. It will therefore be a great gain if the League succeeds in bringing about some cooperation and specially in associating at least the advanced white workers with the oppressed races in South Africa. A recent agreement between the Governments of South Africa and India has apparently been approved in India. I am unable to express an opinion on it, though it does not seem to me to go very far. But in any event it would be foolish to imagine that the troubles of Indian settlers in South Africa are over and the help of the other communities should be very welcome.

Probably some organisation will also be formed in North Africa.

The pressure of the right wing and the lukewarmness of many of the other Labourites in England is hampering work on behalf of the League in England. Lansbury and some others are keen but they feel that caution is necessary so as not to antagonise the others. The main objection raised is that the League draws its inspiration from Russia and technical difficulties are also raised to the effect that Labour organisations in England being affiliated to the 2nd International cannot be formally associated with another international organisation. The first objection does not carry one very far. The executive committee of the League has, I believe, a majority of non-communists and there is no reason why they should be led by the nose by the minority. Besides it is obvious that the League can only work satisfactorily on more or less common lines of action. A narrow majority ignoring a minority will soon break up the League. In any event it is premature to condemn the League before it does anything to which objection can be taken.

The second objection appears to me to be untenable. The League has been formed on a broad enough basis to include national organisations on the one hand and labour organisations belonging both to the 2nd and the 3rd Internationals. So long as there is no conflict between the principles and the practice of the League and those of another organisation, the latter is certainly at liberty to associate itself with the League.

This [China] of course will continue to be the principal activity of the League. The delegates from other countries—Egypt, Syria, South Africa, America etc.—realised how much their own future depended on the issue in China and have decided to make China a principal plank in their own national campaigns.

The situation in China continues to be grave. The British Government has, for all practical purposes, abandoned even its pretence of neutrality, in spite of all assertions to the contrary. Their troops are

stationed now in the Chinese part of Shanghai, outside the confines of the International Settlement. The commander of the Shantung troops—Chang Chung Chang—who is now opposing the Cantonese, has been allowed to fix up his headquarters inside the International Settlement and in all probability he is receiving every help from the British. He is admittedly and notoriously a brigand well known and hated all over China for his ruthlessness. The recent mass executions of strikers and pickets in Shanghai could never have taken place if the British troops had not been landed there and had not given their moral support to the Shanghai defence forces.

The battle for Shanghai may take place at any moment and the probability is that the Cantonese will defeat Chang Chung Chang. They will immediately then come face to face with the British troops and if these latter are outside the Settlement boundaries there is every chance of friction. The foreign troops in Shanghai have no great importance apart from the British contingents. They have been sent there for form's sake and I understand that they have instructions to avoid all conflicts. No foreign troops excepting the British and Italians—there is an unholy alliance between Austen Chamberlain<sup>5</sup> and Mussolini—are outside the Settlement boundaries. The British troops are fully equipped and have the latest tanks and aeroplanes.

The Chinese problem is intimately connected with the relations between Russia and England. The recent exchange of notes between these two countries has not added any lustre to England. Probably England is not yet prepared to face a rupture but conditions are bound to get worse.

As I informed the President of the A.I.C.C., Chinese representatives were invited to England by a number of Labourites. The British Government has however refused to give them visas. It is clear that a similar policy will be adopted in the case of Chinese visiting India or Indians visiting China. But this is no reason why every effort should not be made on our behalf to get into touch with the Chinese.

As I have already cabled to the President, A.I.C.C., the headquarters of the Kuo Min Tang in Canton have thankfully accepted the invitation of the Indian National Congress to send representatives to India. They have nominated for this purpose: Madame Sun Yat Sen, Professor Kuo Meng yu of the National University, Pek-

5. Sir Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937); British Conservative politician; was Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1903-5; Secretary of State for India, 1915-17; a member of the War Cabinet from April 1918; and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1919-21. He succeeded Bonar Law as Conservative leader in 1921. From 1924 to 1929 he was Foreign Secretary.

ing and Wang Tsen Way, a member of the Central Executive of the Kuo Min Tang. The fact that the Kuo Min Tang attach considerable importance to this visit can be seen from the names of their nominees. They are all very important persons in their movement. Madame Sun Yat Sen is of course famous, Professor Kuo Meng Yu is the head of the propaganda section of the Kuo Min Tang. Steps are now being taken by the Kuo Min Tang to get visas for their nominees to visit India. It is highly unlikely that they will succeed in getting their visas. If they do not I trust the fullest publicity will be given to this fact in India and questions put in the Assembly.

The Chinese have suggested to me that perhaps it will be easier for Indians to go to China and they therefore desired that the Indian Congress should try to send representatives. I do not agree with them in thinking that this will be any easier but nonetheless I feel that an attempt should be made, especially if the Government do not allow the Chinese to come to India. I might mention that the Chinese have suggested to me that among the Indian representatives might be Dr. Ansari. I do not quite know why Dr. Ansari's name was suggested but in any case Dr. Ansari would be an excellent choice. I believe the idea was that some solid and substantial persons who had a recognised position in India might be sent, partly because they wanted such persons and partly because they might have a better chance of reaching China and returning to India.

Our Chinese friends are extraordinarily keen on India doing something substantial to help them. They keep asking me what is being done and what more can be done.

As I stated in my last note, a long cablegram was sent to the President of the Indian National Congress by the President of the Brussels Congress on or about 13th February. But the last mail dated 18th February received from India contains no reference to this cable although a subsequent cable of mine is acknowledged. I am thus inclined to think that the first cable was suppressed by the Government. This is rather annoying as the cable cost £16.

It is proposed to hold a meeting of the Executive Committee of the League in Amsterdam within the next fortnight. I shall endeavour to attend.

Montana,  
March 7th 1927

Jawaharlal Nehru

29. To N.S. Hardikar<sup>1</sup>

Clinique Stephani,  
Montana s/Sierre,  
Switzerland  
8.3.1927

My dear Hardikar,

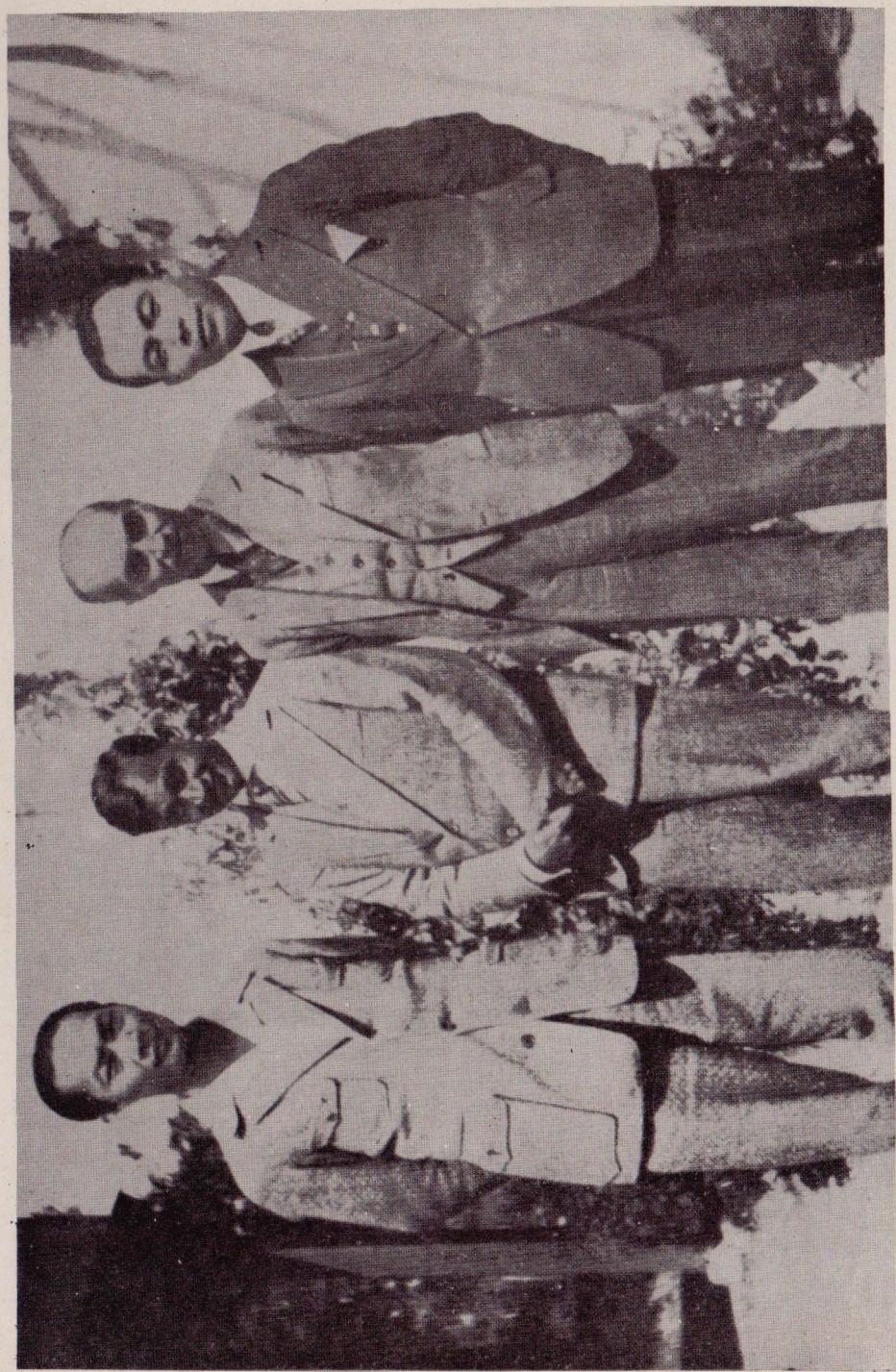
I have read your letter to Goswami<sup>2</sup> in the *Forward*, regarding the raising of a contingent of the H.S. Dal for ambulance work in China. I am very glad you have made a proposal of this kind. It is up to us in India to do something practical for China. Vague resolutions of sympathy do not carry one far. What form this practical help should take I cannot say from this distance. But I do hope that the All India Board of the Dal will decide on something effective.

In considering this question there are three matters to be borne in mind: men, money and the facilities which the Government will give us. The third matter is entirely beyond our control and it is highly likely that every difficulty will be placed in our way. All we can do is to make a reasonable and practicable proposal and for the rest we can ignore the action that Government might take. If we do our best and are prevented from proceeding further by Government it is not our fault.

I would imagine that the proposal to raise and send a large number of volunteers—200 as you suggest—would meet with insuperable difficulties. Perhaps you might raise the men but very large funds would be necessary and it is certain that Government would come in the way. It would be far more feasible to send a selected batch of say 20 or 25 volunteers trained in ambulance work. The funds required would not be very great and other difficulties would proportionately be less. In selecting these 20 or 25 men it would be desirable to get representatives of different provinces to some extent at least. If funds are not sufficient for even so many then only 10 need be sent. The number does not matter so much, it is the spirit of active help that will create a very good impression in China and India.

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Tulsi Charan Goswami (1898-1957); a zamindar of Serampore who was educated at Calcutta and Oxford and then entered politics; was a supporter of the Swaraj Party and helped Chitta Ranjan Das to start the newspaper *Forward*. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1923-30 and 1937-45 and Deputy Leader of the Party till 1939. In 1943 he served as Finance Minister in the Bengal Government.



WITH SOME DELEGATES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 1927.  
ON THE EXTREME RIGHT IS DR. MOHAMMAD HATTA, LATER VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA.

Confidential - Not for publication

The

International

Report on the Congress against Imperialism was held  
at Brussels from February 10<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1927, submitted  
by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Working Committee of the  
Indian National Congress.

In compliance with the resolution of the National Congress,  
passed at Gaithor, appointing one non representative at  
the International Congress against Imperialism, & I had the  
honour to attend the sessions of this International Congress  
and to take part in its proceedings. I am submitting  
separately <sup>another</sup> ~~brief~~ report for publication and for distribution  
amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee - But  
as it was not possible to refer to many matters in that  
report and I wish the Working Committee to be in possession  
of all the facts, in order to enable them to take such  
action as they may deem necessary, I have decided to  
submit this further and more detailed report.

The Brussels Congress, regarded from any point of view, was  
an event of first class importance and it is likely to have far-reaching  
results. This the English press, so far as I am aware, has given little  
or no publicity to it, with the exception of some labour organs.  
The continental press gave some more publicity but even here

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If your Board decides on some such action and the funds are available I would advise you to communicate immediately with the Kuo Min Tang party in Canton offering your services. You need not wait for Government permission. If Government subsequently refuse permission you can inform the Canton Government or Kuo Min Tang of it.

It would be a great thing if some action was taken quickly. Time is important. Keep me informed of what you do. My address will be C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Geneva.

I am enclosing a note for the *Volunteer*.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

The note for the *Volunteer*<sup>3</sup> has developed into a little article. It might be worthwhile to send copies of it to other papers in order to give it greater publicity immediately.

J. N.

3. See item 39.

### 30. Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India<sup>1</sup>

10.3.1927

During a short visit to London which I paid in September last, I had occasion to meet the Secretary of the Independent Labour Party. He told me that it was the desire of his party to take up a well defined attitude in regard to India and then to endeavour to get the whole Labour Party to adopt this, so that when Labour comes to power they would be more or less committed to this line of action. The present position was highly unsatisfactory. Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill<sup>2</sup> had been formally adopted by the Labour Party but it was a measure which created no enthusiasm in the I.L.P. (Independent Labour Party) or in India. They proposed therefore that another bill should be drafted and if the Indian leaders agree to its provisions, the I.L.P. should formally adopt it and carry on propaganda on it. At

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In 1925 the British Labour Party decided to support this Bill, which was intended to place India on an equal footing with the Dominions, but in fact vested certain residual powers with the viceroy.

the present moment they are handicapped from taking up a strong enough attitude in public as if they do so, they are immediately confronted with the milk and water provisions of Mrs. Besant's bill which, for the time being, is an official Labour Party measure.

The I.L.P. felt that they could not do much in this direction without the backing of the Indian leaders. It would be difficult enough for them to convert the whole or a majority of the Labour Party to their view, not to mention the general public, but this task would become far more difficult if they had no support in India.

I told them that I appreciated their position and would gladly help them in any way I could. Personally I did not like the idea of drafting bills for Parliament or of Indian leaders or organisations committing themselves to any such bill! No bill could contain my idea of complete independence. But I added that the leaders in India would probably agree to a bill which was advanced enough, that is a bill which actually and immediately gave India full Dominion Status, not in theory only as Mrs. Besant's bill does. Even so, I added further, it would perhaps be better for the I.L.P. to go ahead on its own initiative, having previously assured itself of the goodwill of the Indian leaders to its measure, without trying to commit the Indian organisations to its formal support.

Various drafts were then sent to me in November for my opinion and I made numerous suggestions. The point I wished to emphasise and make absolutely clear was that the bill must provide for the immediate control of the Indian army by India and that no foreign army of occupation could be allowed to remain in India. A fresh draft was thereupon prepared, taking Mrs. Besant's bill as the basis and a short time ago I made further suggestions on this draft and sent them to the I.L.P. These suggestions, in the main, were as follows :

I have stated that on further consideration my doubts about the desirability of any Parliamentary Bill have increased. I cannot reconcile myself to India being a consenting party to her continued adherence to the British Empire. I feel strongly that the one and only aim which India can have is complete independence and the I.L.P. should also declare itself unequivocally in favour of this. I can well understand that the I.L.P. desires that India and England should cooperate together in the future but this cooperation can only come about after India has severed her connection with the British Empire. The I.L.P. cannot, if it wishes to be true to its own ideals and general policy, refuse to support the demand for Indian independence. I had some discussions on this point with I.L.P. members in Brussels. They admitted the correctness of my contention but almost every Englishman, however advanced

he may be politically, is a bit of an imperialist in matters relating to India. Having admitted the principle, they sought refuge in practice and in the oft-repeated statement that they could not demand independence for India when India herself had not demanded it and indeed had repeatedly refused to countenance the idea. I was not prepared to admit this latter statement in its entirety but even granting the fact that India does not want independence, I gave it as my firm opinion that it was upto the I.L.P. to press for it. Independence was the only right solution of the problem and the fact that we in India feared to claim it as our due was only a vivid illustration of our own mental degradation and of the injury that England had done to us. It was absurd to ask a country under military occupation and with all manner of penalties attached to political work to express her real opinion on this subject. It was equally absurd to expect, after many generations of British domination and repression, that we would not be very much affected by the false ideology of our British rulers and by the slave mentality which this had produced. We have had since the Great War plebiscites in certain parts of Europe, Silesia<sup>3</sup> for instance. All the world knows the value of these plebiscites taken under the shadow of guns. And a plebiscite in India today would have an even less value for we have not only the guns but the perverted outlook which long association with the British has given us. So I contended that even if India did not want independence today, or even went so far as to declare herself definitely against it, even then it was upto the I.L.P. to declare that independence was India's due and she must have it. Afterwards when she had gained complete freedom and was in a position to form a right opinion she could easily, if she so wished, associate herself with the British Empire or Commonwealth. But not before.

I further pointed out that as a matter of fact it was not quite correct to say that India desired to remain in the British Empire. The reaction after the noncooperation movement had certainly produced a feeling of weariness and a desire for compromise in many of our leaders and others. Further the mere fact of working in the Councils in India necessitated the toning down of our demand to dominion rule. A demand for independence was out of court in the Assembly or Councils. Thirdly there was the feeling that an uncompromising demand for independence by the Congress might result in the declaration of the Congress as an unlawful assembly and thus bring about a crisis

3. A plebiscite was held in Silesia in 1921 to determine whether Upper Silesia should remain in Germany or be transferred to Poland. The plebiscite resulted in a heavy vote for Germany except in the easternmost part of Upper Silesia.

which we in our present moment of weakness were not prepared to meet. And fourthly since the reaction which followed noncooperation the masses have largely kept away from the Congress and there is a preponderance of certain elements in it which on the whole profit by the British connection and are thus reluctant to break it. In spite of these four substantial reasons the urge for a Congress declaration in favour of independence has been growing and it has only been the personal influence and pressure of influential leaders which has kept it down. And I feel sure that it cannot be kept down very much longer. (May I add here that the arguments advanced by Mr. Gandhi<sup>4</sup> at Gauhati were in my humble opinion, and I say so with all respect, wholly untenable and based on an entirely wrong ideology).

I placed all these considerations before the I.L.P. and also pointed out that even in their own interests it was highly desirable for them to press for Indian independence and nothing short of it. British policy was aimed today at bringing about a close cooperation between certain capitalist, landlord and other elements in India profiting by the British connection with similar elements in England. The Indian States would of course fall in this group. And thus we may have in India in the near future a measure of freedom, just enough to break the backs of the advanced groups, and with all the power vested in groups friendly to English imperialism. It would be an alliance of imperialist England and an imperialist India, which would not only make real freedom and progress in India difficult but would lengthen the life of British imperialism. The I.L.P. could hardly desire this to happen and the most effective method of preventing it was to make India wholly independent.

Thus any Parliamentary Bill, which necessarily confined itself to Dominion rule, would not receive the support of at least that section in India which believes in independence. But I made it clear that probably it might be approved by most of our leaders.

Subject to the above, I made a number of other suggestions on the draft sent to me. This draft was rather vague on the question of defence. I had previously laid stress on Indian control of all military services. I again pointed out that unless this was made quite clear, the bill was in my opinion utterly worthless, and although it might be

4. Mahatma Gandhi opposed a resolution that 'Swaraj' should be defined to mean independence free of any British control. He said he himself would be satisfied with any constitution which gave India the power to declare independence. He asked the people to be patient and attain what was possible at the moment and then "mount further steps". Even the Dutch Boers had been content with Dominion Status though they could have declared their independence.

approved even as it was by some, it would meet with fierce and continuous opposition by others. The bill should lay down that the full control of all military, naval and air services should pass on forthwith to the Indian Parliament or executive and the actual withdrawal of foreign troops and the transfer of Indian troops to Indian control should begin immediately. The actual technique of transfer may take a little time — but not long — but the theoretical control must vest immediately in the Indian executive.

A suggestion was made by some members of the I.L.P. that there should be no second chambers either in the Central or the Provincial legislatures. I entirely agreed with this. The proposed Senate in Mrs. Besant's bill is a most objectionable body. Any second chamber would either be based on a wide electorate and would thus be an unnecessary and undesirable duplication of the first chamber, or it would be based on a restricted electorate and would be a reactionary body always creating deadlocks.

A suggestion of mine, approved by the others, was the reconstitution of the provinces on a linguistic basis. Hindustani, with English as a permissible alternative, should be the official language of the Central legislature; and the language of the province and Hindustani should be the official language of each province.

The franchise for both the Central and the Provincial legislatures is proposed to be the same adult franchise. No property or educational qualifications are mentioned; only three years' residence and earning one's living. The latter is a rather vague phrase but the idea is clear and can be put in better language.

The minute details of village organisation in Mrs. Besant's bill have been left out. It was felt that statutory provision for them would really hamper growth as there would be no flexibility.

In regard to the Indian States, no change has been suggested in their status in the draft bill, but they will be under the new Indian Central Government, which will take the place of the present Government of India. It will be open to the new Government by negotiation to bring about changes.

There were many other suggestions made to which reference need not be made here. On the whole the draft was made on the Irish model—the Irish oath of allegiance etc. being the least objectionable.

I do not know what the I.L.P. has finally decided on the suggestions made by me. But I have today received a letter from the I.L.P. office which informs me that their Council has been considering the question and the procedure they propose adopting is as follows: after preparing their final draft they will send copies of it to a number of

Indian leaders for their opinion and suggestions. If they generally approve, the draft will be sent formally with a covering letter to Indian political organisations—they will probably address other organisations besides the Congress. In this covering letter they propose to say frankly that should India demand complete independence the I.L.P. will support it; should India desire to remain within the British Commonwealth, the I.L.P. will support the demand provided it is a demand for full Dominion Status. Should, however, India desire to retain British control over the army and the Indian States, the I.L.P. will be sorry and although it will support this demand, it will not do so whole-heartedly. The draft bill which will be sent will give India control over the army and Indian States. The letter from the I.L.P. office continues as follows: "The Committee felt encouraged to go on with the bill in view of Srinivasa Iyengar's statement about drafting a bill. The National Council merely wants to push forward the matter and not in any way to intervene. If Srinivasa Iyengar proposes a bill to which every one agrees and if it is not a bill which leaves the army and the Indian States altogether in the hands of the Viceroy, the I.L.P. will scrap its own bill and take up Iyengar's bill. We want to draft the bill to show the best which will arouse our whole-hearted support. Less than that will be merely 'reforms' which we feel could not rouse our enthusiasm, though we will support it." This letter contains not only the opinion of the individual who wrote it but it apparently purports to give the opinion of the I.L.P. Council.

It is an irony not without significance that the I.L.P. should express fear that the Indian leaders might tone down their demands to immaterial and trivial reforms which do little good and rouse less enthusiasm. But the record of the past few years shows that their apprehension is not unjustified.

I have so far not written on this subject to India but now that matters are taking some shape I thought it would be desirable to inform the members of the Working Committee about them. Probably it will be some little time before the I.L.P. communicates with Indian leaders and the formal letter to the Congress will only go much later. But as Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar apparently intends drafting a bill he may be interested in knowing of what the I.L.P. are doing. The Working Committee may also perhaps find a knowledge of what some Labour circles are doing in England useful in considering further developments in the political situation in India.

The I.L.P. do not desire any publicity to be given to their proposal at this stage either in India or England. They are afraid that publicity, before the full draft is ready after consultation with Indian leaders, will

make their task more difficult in England. The Labour Party as is well known has among its ranks imperialists of the richest hue; a majority and the party machinery are still under the control of men like MacDonald and Thomas who probably are a shade worse in regard to India than even Birkenhead<sup>5</sup>. But the I.L.P. is growing in power and as has been shown in the Chinese crisis they can occasionally bring the Labour Party upto the mark. It is therefore desirable that this note and the suggestion of the I.L.P. be kept confidential for the present.

Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Frederick Edwin Smith (1872-1930); first Earl Birkenhead; Conservative Lord Chancellor 1919-22 and then Secretary of State for India 1924-28.

**31. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

Clinique Stephani,  
Montana s/Sierre,  
Switzerland

15.3.1927

My dear Bapuji,

I have not written to you for a very long time. I have purposely avoided doing so, so as not to add to your work, and have contented myself by sending you news of us through Mahadeva and Devadas. But neither of them has been, so far as I am concerned, an extraordinarily good correspondent. Of this I do not make the slightest complaint, as I can fully realise how busy Mahadeva must be with his numerous activities, and Devadas, I am very sorry to learn, has not been keeping well. Besides, *Young India* has been keeping me supplied with news about you. But the effect of not hearing often or frequently from any person is a slackening at this end also. And so I have not written as often even to Mahadeva or Devadas as I might otherwise have done.

I presume you have been in some sort of touch through father with our movements here and the state of Kamala's health. It is a year, almost to a day, since we landed at Venice, and it must be confessed that the results of the year's treatment have been far from satisfactory. At present Kamala is keeping well and latterly she has made real progress. I am hoping that this will continue but still I have a feeling

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12590.

that although she may be outwardly cured care will be necessary in future to prevent relapses. She goes out for fairly long walks now and so far as appearances go looks healthier than she has done for some years.

I had hoped to return to India in spring this year but this is not likely now. It is hardly wise to go during the monsoon. So it seems that we must stay on here till late August. We propose to remain in Montana for another five weeks and then to go down to Montreux, quite near the place where M. Romain Rolland lives, and later to France and England. If necessary we shall return to Montana for another few weeks' rest and treatment in the summer.

Indira has been living at a little school two or three hours journey from here. We see her about once a month. She will join us when we go down from Montana. Krishna is with us and is well.

You must have read of my going to the Brussels Congress. I had the pleasure of meeting a number of very interesting persons there. Among these was Ernst Toller, a young but famous German dramatist. I have only read one of his works — the *Machine Wreckers*<sup>2</sup> — but this I liked. It deals with the early industrial period of England and the hostility of the workers to machinery. It would interest you. Toller asked me specially to send you his respectful regards.

We have all been very glad to get reports of your good health.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

2. Published in 1923.

### 32. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Clinique Stephani,  
Montana,  
s/Sierre, Suisse  
March 16, 1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I have just received a bundle of papers from Berlin containing various resolutions and speeches of the Brussels Congress. Some of these papers have already been sent to you. Nonetheless I am sending this

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 29, 1927, Part II, pp. 129—130. N.M.M.L.

whole lot to you under separate registered cover. This is by no means a full record of the Congress, but most of the important resolutions and some of the interesting speeches are included. I would specially draw your attention to the draft organisation resolution. I am sorry the resolution on Mesopotamia has not been included in this lot.

I would suggest that considerable publicity be given to this material. The speeches of course vary in merit greatly but almost all of them have something of interest in them, specially for the Indian public. Lansbury's is certainly worth reproducing; Pollitt's also is good; and the others from South Africa and America and other countries represent viewpoints which are sure to interest Indians and give them a wider outlook. Perhaps it might be desirable to send copies of this material to the principal newspapers in India. This will involve some work for your office but it would be worthwhile. But probably this may not be necessary as I now find, on referring to the letter from Berlin, that the material will be sent directly to the papers in India. Anyway I hope you will see that it is properly utilized.

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism will take place in Amsterdam on the 27th March. I hope to attend it.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

During the China debate in the House of Commons last week the full joint resolution of the British, Chinese and Indian delegates at Brussels was read out, including the names of the signatories. Evidently some of the Conservative members were exceedingly annoyed.

Please note that my address in future will be C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Geneva.

### 33. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>

Montana  
22.3.1927

My dear Mahmud,

The last mail brought your "private" letter. I appreciate it and thank you for it. But of course you know that your advice to me is not

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

exactly novel in any sense. Ordinary common sense teaches it, not to mention an elementary knowledge of psychology.

I did not know that you were continuing your communion with the spirit world. I am sorry that you are wasting your time in this way. The older I grow the more I feel that there is so much to be learnt and studied and so little time to do it in. Most of us after a very perfunctory education imagine that we have learnt as much as is necessary and do not even attempt to increase our knowledge. This is sad, for progress can only come with knowledge and the few years that we spend at school and college teach us precious little.

I have been much surprised to read a sentence in your letter, about a friend helping and protecting another even though the latter may misbehave terribly and turn traitor. Is this a correct conception of friendship? Friendship flourishes on common ideals and endeavour. Without them there can be no true friendship. If I ever turned false to such an ideal or turned traitor I would expect my friend to shoot me and not to protect and help me.

Kamala has been keeping well lately and is making good progress. We shall be here for another month when we go down to Montreux and then Paris.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 34. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Montana  
s/Sierre  
26-3-1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I have just received your letter of the 10th March.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism is going to be held at Amsterdam on the 29th March and I propose attending. I had hoped that perhaps before this meeting I would receive some instructions from India about the attitude of the Working Committee towards the League but it is evident that my full

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, pp. 523-524. N.M.M.L.

report had not reached you when you wrote last. I shall therefore have to rely on my native intelligence at Amsterdam.

The agenda of the Executive Committee meeting contains, *inter alia*, the question of giving further support to the Chinese people in their struggle against imperialism, and the problems of Latin America (Mexico, Nicaragua etc.). There is a proposal, I believe, to hold a conference in Hankau in China but I have not got any details of it yet.

The most important point to be discussed however is the permanent organisation of the League. All future work necessarily depends on this organisation and care has to be taken that it should not only be effective but really representative and not dominated by a particular clique. Some members of the League are afraid that it might develop into an organisation taking its orders from the Communist International in Moscow and are therefore desirous of preventing this. There is no objection to cooperating with or conferring with people who represent the communist viewpoint but there is considerable objection to the League being used merely as a tool to further the objects of another organisation. This is the point of view of several important members of the League in England. Personally I agree with it. I have already touched on this point in my report to the Working Committee. As far as I have been able to make out there is not very much justification for this fear. The Executive Committee has all interests represented and it will be difficult to convert it into a mere offshoot of the Communist International. Its work can only be carried on satisfactorily on a basis of unanimity on essentials at least. The organisers of the League have laid stress on this and evidently realise its importance. The presence of Lansbury as chairman also indicates that the cooperation of the non-communist elements is considered essential.

A further important point is the manner in which other organisations can be associated with the League in its work. They can be affiliated to it as more or less subordinate bodies but obviously this cannot be done in the case of important national or labour organisations. It has been suggested that some manner of association short of formal affiliation might be devised. I think this suggestion ought to get over all difficulties. So far as the Congress in India is concerned it could easily associate itself with the League without thereby in any way committing itself to anything unknown. An association would signify an approval of the objects of the League and a desire to cooperate with the League and with other organisations having more or less similar objects.

I wrote to you and also mentioned in my report that a long cablegram was sent to you from Brussels embodying the joint resolution of

the Indian, Chinese and British delegates to the Congress. In a subsequent letter I hinted that this cable had probably been suppressed by the Indian government as no acknowledgement had been received by me. I was all along under the impression that the cable had been sent by the secretariat of the League; the secretaries however thought that I had sent the full resolution by cable and so they satisfied themselves by sending a short cable to Srinivasa Iyengar in which they made a brief reference to this resolution. I am sorry I did an injustice to the government by suggesting that they had stopped the cable.

I am enclosing a short report of a meeting on China held in London by the Indians resident there. It took place some time ago but perhaps you have not seen the resolutions. I understand that they were cabled to Gandhiji.

I have often been taken aback by the headings and the general presentation of Chinese news in Indian newspapers. Reuter's cables are invariably partial and our newspapers take them for gospel truth and even give their headlines accordingly. This is a most insidious form of propaganda. Now that the Chinese nationalists have taken possession of both Shanghai and Nanking a critical situation has arisen and every effort is being made in the English press to run them down. Already reports of 'atrocities' are coming in. I do hope that Indian newspapers will exercise a modicum of commonsense and not play into the hands of the British imperialists. I have arranged for some Chinese news to be sent to them from time to time from the Chinese Information Bureau in London. You will also get a copy.

I hope to send you a report of the Amsterdam meeting next week if I come back in time for the mail.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 35. Note for the Working Committee<sup>1</sup>

I visited Amsterdam last week to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism. The meeting was held on the 29th and 30th March 1927 and was attended, amongst others, by George Lansbury (Chairman), Edo Fimmen (Vice-Chairman), Bridgeman (England), Roger Baldwin (U.S.A.), Liau (China) and representatives from Germany, Belgium etc. The principal item on the agenda was the consideration of the future organisation of the League.

1. 4 April 1927. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II/1927-28, pp. 493—521. N.M.M.L.

The Brussels Congress has evidently put out various governments greatly. We were informed that the British and French governments have formally addressed the Belgian government on the subject and expressed their regret at the latter having given facilities for the holding of the Congress. This was done privately and no reference to it has appeared in the press. The French government has gone further and arrested Senghor, a negro delegate to the Congress from the French African colonies and a member of the Executive Committee of the League. He has been arrested in Paris for high treason, objection being taken to the speech he delivered to the Congress. This speech was in French and I have already sent a verbatim report of it to the A.I.C.C. Office. Official activity was also noticeable in other directions. Our passports were carefully scrutinised in Amsterdam, presumably in the hope that some flaw might be discovered.

The Executive Committee sent a message of sympathy to Senghor and a protest to the French Premier Poincare<sup>2</sup>.

Liau, the representative of the Kuomintang, told us about the situation in China. He said that the joint resolution of the English, Indian & Chinese delegates at Brussels and the joint declaration of the Indian & Chinese delegates had been much appreciated in China and had created a very good impression. He told us something of the Nanking incident<sup>3</sup> but at the time particulars were lacking. It appeared however that the bombardment of the town of Nanking, with a population of a million, by British & American warships had done a great deal of damage to the town and resulted in the death of large numbers of the inhabitants. A resolution regretting the death of foreign nationals and strongly protesting against the bombardment and calling upon labour and other organisations to take all necessary steps to prevent hostilities developing, was passed.

Liau also informed us that the Kuomintang proposed to hold a big conference at Hankau in June to which they were inviting representatives from India, Indonesia and other Eastern countries. The Chinese nationalists were very desirous of having these representatives of Eastern countries at the conference. The committee welcomed the proposal and decided to endeavour to send a delegation, representing the League to the conference. This delegation is to consist of four or five persons and among those chosen were Lansbury and Roger Baldwin. In case any of those chosen cannot go others could be appointed.

2. Raymond Poincare (1860-1934); French statesman; President of France (1913-20); Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, 1912 and 1922, and Prime Minister 1926-1929.
3. In March 1927 the Nationalist armies captured Nanking undeterred by the large-scale and indiscriminate attack by foreign warships.

A resolution was also passed against American aggression in Nicaragua and Mexico and a summary of this was cabled to President Coolidge<sup>4</sup>.

The question of organisation was fully discussed. Lansbury pointed out the difficulties in the way of the League in England. It was possible, he said, to call upon the Communists and others of the extreme left wing to organise the work of the League in England and to carry on agitation on a large scale. These people were strong enough to carry on an effective and sustained agitation of this kind but if they are the principal persons at the back of it, the official Labour movement would not only not help but would oppose them. In spite of this opposition however much would be done. If on the other hand it was desired to work in association with the Labour Party or even with the left wing of the Party, it would be necessary to keep the Communists in the background, and progress will be slow. The English Labour Party is terrified of the Communists and as is well known has formally expelled them from its ranks. The right wing of the Labour Party is definitely imperialistic and is hostile to the League against Imperialism. The left wing is favourably inclined to the League but it would hardly invite a break or much friction with the right wing over the question of support of the League. Thus in order to get the left wing to do anything in the matter it was necessary not to force the pace, but to proceed gradually in England. Lansbury as Vice-Chairman of the Labour Party in England naturally spoke with a sense of responsibility and gave expression more to the right wing view than the view of the left wing. He himself is supposed to be in the centre although occasionally his enthusiasm carries him a little further. Very probably a left winger would have expressed himself differently. In fact Bridgeman, who was present at the meeting, was thoroughly dissatisfied with Lansbury's exposition, but Bridgeman has no particular weight in English politics. After some discussion the committee was of opinion that it was desirable not to rush matters in England and as far as possible to get the principal leaders of the Labour left wing to join the League and work for it in England.

In considering the question of the organisation and specially the affiliations of other associations, it was pointed out that there may be, and in fact were, national and other organisations which might not agree with the full programme of the League, and yet might be willing to cooperate with it to a limited extent. The negroes in the U.S.A., for instance, had a powerful organisation which was mainly concerned with

4. President of the United States from 1923 to 1929.

raising their status and not directly with imperialism as such. I pointed out that the Indian National Congress, although opposed to imperialism, had not adopted the socialist viewpoint and might not agree with some of our resolutions and activities. It was therefore desirable that our constitution should allow such organisations to be associated with us. This was agreed to and it was decided to have (i) affiliated organisations which would be more or less wholly in favour of the programme or activities of the League and (ii) associated organisations, which at least partly agreed with the programmes and activities and were prepared to cooperate to that extent.

Even in the case of affiliated organisations it does not of course follow that they are bound to agree with every resolution or activity of the League. In all international organisations the only way to proceed is to allow the utmost freedom to the affiliated bodies. Thus there is no vital difference between the affiliated body and the associated body. It is a question of degree, and in the latter case some stress is laid on the fact that there are or may be points of difference.

Thus there are to be affiliated organisations and associated organisations. It was also decided to permit individuals to join the League directly. In any country or suitable area where there are several affiliated or associated organisations and individual members, a national section might be formed to coordinate the activities of the various constituent bodies.

The rates of subscription of the constituent bodies were fixed as follows :—

*Affiliated Organisations:*

If their membership is or under	1000	£ 2
" "	1000 to 5000	£ 3
" "	5000 to 10000	£ 4
For every subsequent or under	10000	£ 1

Half these rates would apply to organisations in colonial countries.

*Associated Organisations:*

A minimum annual subscription of £ 3

*Individual members:*

An annual subscription—not fixed  
for the present; left to the member.

It will be noticed that the rates are on the whole moderate. It is possible that the Miners' Federation of Great Britain might decide

to affiliate itself with the League, even though the Labour Party as a whole keeps aloof, the Federation being much more advanced or extreme. It has a membership of 8,000,000. It would then have to pay £ 83 annually, which is not a large sum for such a great organisation. If it chose to become an associate organisation it can pay anything from £ 3 upwards.

The rates for colonial countries for affiliated organisations were fixed at half the other rates as it was felt that Labour and other organisations there were seldom strong or well financed.

The fee of £ 3 for associated organisations is of course a minimum. It is expected that in actual practice the principal organisations will give large sums, otherwise it would be difficult to carry on the work of the League.

The subscription of individual members has not been fixed. No special effort will be made in most countries to enrol individuals. There are cases however where an individual not connected with an organisation desires to join and is willing to contribute handsomely to the funds of the League. A case was mentioned to us of an American who would like to do so and might pay \$ 500 to \$ 1,000 for the privilege.

The financial position of the League at present is far from good. All the funds collected for the Brussels Congress had been exhausted—the expenditure there had been on a fairly lavish scale. In fact a small loan had to be raised for the expenses of the Executive Committee meeting. Some donations, to be paid within two or three weeks, were immediately promised at the committee meeting. These were U.S.A. \$ 1000, Latin America \$ 500, Germany \$ 1000. There is a proposal before the Kuomintang to contribute \$ 10,000 but this may take a little time to decide. The Egyptian representative has promised to try to send £ 500. I was asked if the Indian Congress would contribute anything substantial but obviously I could not give a definite answer.

The approximate budget estimate of the League office is as follows:

Monthly office expenses	\$ 1000
Report of Brussels Congress (Printing etc.)	\$ 500
Sending of 5 delegates to the Hankau Conference	\$ 5000

It was decided that a full financial statement of the Brussels Congress should be issued as soon as possible and that every three months a financial report be sent to the members of the Executive Committee. The Secretary was authorised to incur the ordinary expenditure but no extraordinary expenditure to be incurred without the sanction either of the Chairman Lansbury or the Vice-Chairman Edo Fimmen.

It is proposed to have several departments in the office each in charge of a responsible official; one department dealing with South

American countries in charge of a man knowing Spanish and able to keep in touch with the press and organisations of South America; another dealing with the Arab countries in West Asia and north Africa, the man in charge to know Arabic; a third for India and Eastern countries, the man in charge to know English of course but also Hindustani. The interests of China are sufficiently looked after by many Chinese in touch with the League. These departments are to be created as soon as financial arrangements have been put on a sound footing.

I have already stated in a previous report that it was proposed to have the headquarters of the League in Paris. But owing to the arrest of Senghor and the attitude of the French government this may not be possible. For the present the office will remain in Berlin but if possible it is proposed to have it in London or alternatively in Brussels or Amsterdam. The only four possible places appear to be London, Brussels, Amsterdam & Berlin and the committee approved of them in the order given. The committee however could not finally decide the matter at this stage. A sub-committee of Lansbury, Fimmen and Nehru was therefore formed to decide this question as well as the matters relating to the Secretariat, office staff etc.

It was decided to issue a full report of the Brussels Congress in French, German & English & I think in Spanish also. A brief report was also to be issued as soon as possible. This is going to be sent with a covering letter and the provisional constitution to all organisations interested in the League.

The General Council of the League had delegated the power of choosing office bearers to the Executive Committee but at the same time there was an understanding that certain persons should be chosen, subject to developments. These persons were formally elected by the committee with one exception.

They were as follows :

Chairman	George Lansbury, M.P.
Vice-Chairman	Edo Fimmen, Secretary of the International Transport Workers Federation, Amsterdam
Secretaries	H. Liau L. Gibarti

A third name had also been suggested by the General Council informally for the Secretaryship—that of Senghor. But as Senghor is under arrest in France, he was left out.

It was decided to issue a fortnightly bulletin of news from the office of the League in English, French & German and in Spanish or any

other language for which special payment is made by the people concerned.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee was provisionally fixed for the first week of August.

I have already in my previous report discussed the advisability of the Indian Congress associating itself with the League against Imperialism. I did not then, nor do I propose doing now, give all the pros and cons, but I submitted to the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee that on the whole it seemed to me highly desirable that there should be some association and that the Congress should contribute something to the funds of the League. Most of the arguments for and against such association will no doubt be before the members of the Working Committee. The League is a new organisation and it has all manner of elements in it. It is not possible to say now how it will develop or whether it will develop at all. The Congress can hardly exercise any control over its policy or its funds from such a distance. For the time being I happen to be here and can act as a kind of connecting link but even this link will not be there after a few months. These are some of the obvious drawbacks. Nonetheless I am clearly of opinion that the Congress should take any risk, if risk there is, and associate itself with the League. This opinion has been further strengthened by the newly framed rule that even such organisations as do not agree with all the programme and activities of the League can become associate bodies. I pressed for this rule chiefly in the interests of the Indian Congress and I feel that the Congress can take advantage of it without in any way committing itself to anything it does not approve of.

An associated organisation has to pay a minimum subscription annually of \$ 3. This small sum was fixed at this more or less nominal figure for an organisation to make it easy for some very small associations in Europe and elsewhere to join. If the Congress decides to associate itself a fairly substantial sum will be expected from it. I suggested previously that \$ 100 might be sent for the present, and later if developments warrant a further sum might be sent. There is of course the possibility that the money we send may be wasted or not profitably spent from our point of view. But that risk has to be taken and on the whole the sum is not great.

I have mentioned above the proposal of the Chinese nationalists to hold a conference in Hankau some time in June. I believe they call it the Pan-Pacific Conference. They are intensely desirous of having some leading representatives of the Indian Congress at this conference. Indeed if it suited the Indian leaders they could change the date of the conference. It is probable that our representatives may not be permitted to go to China by the government. That is a matter over which

we have little control but it would certainly appear desirable for the Congress to endeavour to send some representatives to the Hankau Conference. The good effect of such a meeting would be very great and all parties concerned will profit by it.

War between England and China appears to be nearer now than ever. The Nanking incident has given the Tory diehards a strong card and they probably imagine that they can rouse up their people for warlike action. Whether they can do so or not remains to be seen but meanwhile fresh troops are going to Shanghai. By no conceivable stretch of imagination can large armies be required just to defend the International Settlement at Shanghai. They can only be required for offensive action against the nationalists. It is quite clear now and is admitted that no internal power or military governor in China can withstand the nationalists. The road to Peking is open for them and within a short time they ought to be in possession of the whole of China proper, unless of course external complications arise. This is not at all agreeable to England and hence all the preparations for war. The Nanking incident is undoubtedly exaggerated greatly by the British government & press. It is quite possible that excited soldiery full of hatred against the English might have misbehaved but it is not easy to believe that any responsible Chinese leader wanted this to happen. Nor is it possible to believe that the bombardment of a city of a million inhabitants did not result in a very large number of casualties and great damages. It is interesting to read the continental press on these happenings. The French government and press are trying their best to minimise the importance of the Nanking & Shanghai events. They are evidently not keen on being dragged into a warlike adventure. The Japanese, in spite of the fact that they were one of the principal sufferers at Nanking, are also sitting on the fence. Only the Americans appear to have joined hands with the British. Meanwhile the attitude of the Chinese is by no means subdued and they do not seem to be frightened by the threats and ultimatums being issued to them.

I shall take the liberty of reminding the Working Committee of what I wrote in my previous report about the far-reaching consequences to India of any war, and of how we cannot, without peril to ourselves, permit events to march to their tragic conclusion without trying our best to shape them to the advantage of India. These events will not wait, nor will the world remain in a state of suspended animation, in order to give us time to settle our differences and create an "atmosphere" for action.

**36. To Rangaswami Iyengar:**

Montana  
5.4.1927

My dear Rangaswami,

Thanks for your letter of the 17th March.

I returned from Amsterdam day before yesterday and I am sending you with this letter a report for the Working Committee on the Amsterdam meeting. I am also enclosing an account of expenditure incurred to date. You will notice that I have now a balance of £7-7-9 left with me. In the last account I sent you I stated that I had lost one of the cable receipts. I have now found it and am enclosing it. The telegraphic office here did not give me any receipts for the cables and telegrams I sent from Montana.

We hope to leave Montana soon. I hope you will remember that my address in future will be c/o Thomas Cook & Son, Geneva.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p. 491. N.M.M.L.

**37. To Raja Rau:**

Montana, s/Sierre,  
Switzerland  
18 April 1927

My dear Raja Rau,

I have received your letter No. G-29/430 of the 31st March. I have not met M. Roger Lievens of Liege nor do I know anything about him. I had a letter from him when I was in Brussels. In my reply I gave him one or two addresses including the address of the A.I.C.C. office. I do not think much need be expected of him. You can send him some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p. 449. N.M.M.L.

pamphlets or literature but in no event should you send him or any other individual in Europe any money.

My wife has been keeping fairly well for some time. We are leaving Montana in a few days. Please note that my address till further notice will continue to be c/o Thos. Cook & Son, Geneva.

I hope everybody in the office is flourishing.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 38. To Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

London  
22.4.27

My dear Bapuji,

I did not send you any cable last week as I could not hit upon a sentence short enough and intelligible enough to convey my meaning. With more thought I adhere to my opinion expressed last week that on the whole it will be better if I am not chosen President.<sup>2</sup> This disinclination is perhaps not due to the reasons you mention. Whether I am President or not I do not suppose I shall keep apart from political activity when I return home. I have begun to feel strongly that a *laissez faire* attitude and trusting to Providence to right matters is a very feeble way of combating evil. I do not of course imagine that any individual can do much but if everyone decided to wait and see nothing would ever be done. Here far away from India it is exceedingly difficult to appreciate fully the position at home and I cannot therefore say exactly what I ought to do on my return, although I have general ideas on the subject. Under the circumstances and for the reasons I mentioned briefly in my last letter I do not feel inclined to welcome the proposal about the Presidentship. You and others in India are likely to be better judges. Personally I should have thought that Ansari would be the best choice.

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12572.

2. There was a suggestion that Jawaharlal be elected President of the Madras session of the Congress to be held in December 1927.

I fancy that you have got a wrong impression about my idea of the utility of the League against Imperialism. I do not expect much from it and indeed I am quite sure that none of the members of the so-called imperialist or oppressing nations will help us in the least whenever their interests conflict with ours. I have no illusions about their altruism. But I welcome all legitimate methods of getting into touch with other countries and peoples so that we may be able to understand their viewpoint and world politics generally. I do not think it is desirable nor indeed is it possible for India to plough a lonely furrow now or in the future. It is solely with a view to self-education and self-improvement that I desire external contacts. I am afraid we are terribly narrow in our outlook and the sooner we get rid of this narrowness the better. Our salvation can of course come only from the internal strength that we may evolve but one of the methods of evolving such strength should be study of other people and their ideas.

I have so much that I wish to write. I have refrained from doing so in the past as I did not want to add to your work. But perhaps if you will permit me I shall write more fully a little later.

We are leaving London and England after about 3 weeks' stay today for Belgium. Kamala has been tolerably well in spite of the fatigue of living in a great city. But she is tired out. I hope she will be fresher after a few days on the Continent. We are all tired of staying in foreign parts and want to go back home. It was my intention to return in September but now father is coming here in August and we can hardly go immediately after his arrival.

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

### 39. The Situation in China and India's Duty<sup>1</sup>

I have read with pleasure the suggestion made by Dr. Hardikar that the Hindustani Seva Dal should try to render some active help to our Chinese comrades, who are today so courageously and successfully carrying on their struggle for freedom not only against reactionary and predatory militarists at home but against the ill-concealed interference and partisanship of imperialist powers. If India were free today, it would have

1. *The Volunteer*, April 1927, pp. 85—86.

been her privilege and duty to render every assistance to China. But unhappily we are bondsmen in our own household, not strong enough even to help ourselves, and far from helping China, we have to witness with shame and humiliation that our resources and manpower are being utilised by our imperialist masters to coerce China and tarnish the good name of India and make her hated by all who strive for freedom. It is well for us to realise the consequences which automatically follow from the use of Indian troops in China. These are not merely the coercion of China and, may be, the postponement for a while of her ultimate emancipation, but the moral isolation of India and the creation of ill-will and hatred against her in a great part of the world. India is not loved today in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in China, in Persia and the Persian Gulf, in parts of Africa etc., for memories of mercenary Indian troops, used for the benefit of British imperialism, linger. Slaves ourselves, it has been our degrading function to help in the enslavement of others for the benefit of a third party.

We are weak today and the use that Indian troops are being put to, is the measure of our utter helplessness. It is right that we should point out our weakness and dissociate ourselves from the action that Government has taken. But is even our helplessness a sufficient excuse for not doing our utmost to prevent the Government from exploiting us in this shameful way? We shall not escape from disaster by pleading our weakness. And though India may be weak, she is not so weak as not to be able to do something effective.

The Chinese Revolution is not an event of local interest and importance. It is a world phenomenon of the greatest historic importance. On the issue in China depends the future of Europe and Asia, and the country which will be most affected by the issue will be India. For us it is a matter of pious hope and empty sympathy.

I hope that the Hindustani Seva Dal will do all in its power to convert this vague sympathy and goodwill for China which every Indian feels, into something more effective and helpful. It should be the business of every member of the Dal to help actively in the creation of a strong and intelligent public opinion on this question so that even the Government of India, filled with disdain for us and proud of its strength, may realise that its policy leads to danger in India. Above all I hope that it will be possible for the Dal to send to China an ambulance corps of trained volunteers carrying the message of goodwill to our Chinese comrades and rendering such help as they can for the relief of pain and suffering. China is holding out her hand of comradeship to India. It is for us to grasp it and to renew our ancient and honourable association and thereby ensure the freedom and progress of both these great countries, which have so much in common.

The invitation which was extended to the Kuo Min Tang Party in China by the Indian National Congress has been eagerly accepted by them and among the representatives they have nominated to visit India is Madam Sun Yat Sen, the revered lady, widow of the great and far-seeing leader of the Chinese Revolution. India will be honoured by her visit and it is up to India to show effectively that she stands shoulder to shoulder with China in her present travail.

I should like to add a warning. The news that India receives about the Chinese struggle comes almost entirely from prejudiced sources and every effort is made by skilful propaganda to run down the national movement there. We should be on our guard against this and not be misled by the exaggerated and misleading reports.

**40. To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>**

Montreux

14.7.27

My dear Mahmud,

I have not written to you for many weeks. Indeed I have written to few friends in India during the last three months. We have been travelling about and I find some difficulty in writing letters unless I have leisure and am in the mood for it. You have often asked me to write every week but I am afraid you have not appreciated the psychology of letter writing. A letter which must be written by a certain time and repeated at regular intervals ceases to give pleasure. Only business communications can be dealt with in this manner and where business is concerned I am punctual enough. You suggest that at least a postcard might be sent every week. But that is a habit I have not developed and my postcards are usually reserved for children. I neither like receiving cards nor do I fancy sending them except for special reasons. We are none of us ill in bed necessitating frequent bulletins. Fortunately we have been keeping tolerably well. A letter can only be justified when it contains some ideas or impressions worth writing about and when I feel I cannot have this justification I am disinclined to write. But this is only a dissertation which means little! As a matter of fact Kamala has been writing to you or to your wife so frequently that I felt I could postpone my reply. And this feeling is a dangerous one for it results in continual postponements.

<sup>1</sup> Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

In one of your letters you ask me why Hindus and Mohamadans cannot live peacefully in India when the followers of various religions in other countries are friendly enough to each other. Surely the answer is simple enough. The Christians and Muslims and Buddhists of other countries have largely shed their religion whilst the Hindus and Muslims in India are steeped in superstition and religion. Here in Europe and elsewhere few persons, excepting some Roman Catholics, lay much stress on religion with the result that their conflicts are not religious but economic. Only the Roman Catholics because they are still over-religious arouse religious antipathy to some extent. As soon as we shed our religion we shall also behave better. Europe has got rid of religion by mass education which followed industrialism. Religion cannot stand the test of large-scale education. This process is bound to be repeated in India. I am convinced that the religion of our masses is skin deep. What is distressing is the behaviour of our prominent politicians.

We are going from here to Annecy and from there to Paris where I have to consult some doctors. Afterwards we shall return to Switzerland.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawaharlal

#### 41. To Rangaswami Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Montana, s/Sierre,  
September 7, 1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I wrote to you a hurried **letter from Gland** last week which I hope you have received.

The Cologne meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism was chiefly occupied with questions of internal organisation. The office of the League has been definitely established in Paris but a subsidiary office will continue in Berlin. Lansbury who was our chairman, has resigned. The reason he gave for this step was over-work. The real reason appears to be the hostility of the leaders of the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127. Part II, 1927-28, p. 445—447. N.M.M.L.

Labour Party in England to the League. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear on Lansbury and he succumbed. He is one of the prospective candidates for the chairmanship of the Labour Party and consequently wants to be on good terms with every wing of it. We had another instance of the hostile attitude of English Labour leaders of the right wing. John Scurr<sup>2</sup> agreed to be the treasurer of the British section of the League but a few days later he had to withdraw because his friends of the Labour Party disapproved of the League. This disapproval is of course confined to the right wing. The Independent Labour Party and the left wing approve of the League and are fully prepared to co-operate with it.

We elected Fenner Brockway in place of Lansbury as our chairman. Brockway, who was present, was perfectly agreeable but as secretary of the Independent Labour Party he wanted to consult his committee before giving his final answer. In all probability his committee will agree and he will be our chairman. In any event he will continue as a member of our Executive Committee.

There was another vacancy in our committee caused by the continued illness of Senghor, our negro member. This was filled by the election of Madame Duchene, a French lady, well-known and much respected. She is intimately connected with the Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

It was decided to hold a meeting of the General Council of the League, consisting of nearly 100 members, in the middle of November in Paris.

We also considered a proposal by some Indonesian organisations to send out a commission of enquiry to Java to investigate into the conditions there and specially into the shootings<sup>3</sup> and the intensive repression of the Dutch government. This proposal was made some time ago and we had been told that the costs of the enquiry commission would be largely paid by the Indonesian organisations. Since then the Dutch government has declared some of these organisations illegal and it is difficult for them to provide the necessary funds. If the commission goes the money for it must largely come from us. But we have little money and so it appears unlikely that we shall be able to send the commission. We have decided however to try to raise a special fund for the purpose and if we raise enough money to send our representative. These representatives have also been chosen. One of them is a Dutchman who was formerly a governor of Java or some other island there; the second is

2. John Scurr (1876-1932); Labour M.P., 1923-31.

3. Between 1911 and 1927 there were mass movements of protest against the injustices perpetrated by the colonialists and the harsh methods of exploitation practised by the Dutch Government.

Mardy Jones<sup>4</sup>, a Labour (miners') M. P. in England; a prominent Frenchman and a German. If the commission goes it will spend about three months in Indonesia. It is proposed that on its way back it might spend some time in India to investigate labour conditions, specially in the mining areas.

Fenner Brockway, as I have already written to you, intends going to India early in December. He will attend the Congress officially as the fraternal delegate of the Independent Labour Party and of the League against Imperialism. I take it that his principal object will be to discuss with Indian leaders the I.L.P. draft bill which he has already circulated. I wish our leaders had enough vision and strength of mind to impress upon him that nothing short of complete independence will satisfy them. If they could only do so they could perhaps get the I.L.P. to support that demand fully. But whether the I.L.P. does it or not the real thing is to press for independence and nothing less. But there is little hope for it, specially after Ansari's amazing statement<sup>5</sup>. Any way I hope you will send a welcoming letter to Fenner Brockway. He is one of the very few men in the Labour movement in England who can take a broad view of India and not be too much obsessed by imperialist conceptions. His address is: I.L.P. office, 14 Great George Street, Westminster, London, S.W. 1.

Saklatvala, although not a member of our committee, was present by invitation at Cologne. He spoke of his impressions of the position in India.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of the report of the Brussels Congress. This is in German and I am afraid will not be of much use to you. But you can add it to the A.I.C.C. library. The English and the French editions of this report will be out shortly and I hope to send them to you.

I enclose an account of expenditure incurred. This, together with the two previous accounts I have sent you, exhausts the amount — £50 — which you sent. There is a small balance £ 2-12-3 due to me but you need not trouble to send it unless you expect me to do anything else on behalf of the Congress which might involve additional expenditure.

In one of your letters you mentioned to me that the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee had agreed to the proposal I had made about our contributing something to the funds of the League against Imperialism.

4. Thomas Isaac Mardy Jones: Labour Member of Parliament from Wales, 1922-31.

5. On 17 August 1927 Dr. Ansari issued a statement that in view of the failure of the noncooperation movement the Congress should cooperate with other parties in the councils and the ministries, and not hesitate, if necessary, even to abandon its basic principles, such as the wearing of *khaddar*.

The proposal I had made was that we should make a first contribution of £ 100 and await developments. I concluded from your letter that this sum of £ 100 had been sanctioned and was being sent and I informed the Berlin office accordingly. But as no contribution has so far come I am inclined to think that I misunderstood you. Kindly let me know definitely what has been decided. If any money has to be sent to the League you had better send it to me and I shall forward it on.

Father is due to arrive in Venice on the 15th and we are all looking forward greatly to meeting him. I am going on to Venice in a few days.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 42. Evolution of British Policy in India<sup>1</sup>

When did British rule start in India? It is difficult to fix a date. The development of British authority has been so gradual — hardly noticeable at the initial stages — that it took more than a hundred years to spread over the whole of India and Burma. However, it is generally admitted that British rule in India dates back to the battle of Plassey won in 1757 — more by intrigues and extortion than by arms. Therefore, 170 years ago Britain became the power dominating India. This long period witnessed several changes and several shifts of policy. I propose to present here the broad outlines of British policy in India and to describe the essential features of its development and modifications, neglecting the many minor factors — though important — and their effects on Indian life. This will perhaps help us in forming a better general idea of the economic and political forces which have contributed to the India of today. An appraisal of these forces can prepare us for a special study of any particular aspect of the Indian problem and its relations with the entire background. In a certain measure, this can also help us in predicting the future.

First of all, I would like to remove from your mind some wrong notions generally associated with the Indian problem. India's well-wishers, as

1. Paper read by Jawaharlal at the Summer School of the International League of Women for Peace and Liberty, held at Gland, Switzerland, September 1927. Translated from the French text published in *Europe*, 1928.

well as those hostile to her, often imagine that our country is radically different from the rest of the world; that East and West are separated like two opposite poles "and never will meet"; that the East, and particularly India, is religious, spiritual, metaphysical, philosophical and in general, outside this world; that consequently, the East is passive and peace-loving whereas the West is very much of this world: irreligious, active, scientific, practical, inventive and fighting. The legend goes that western legions used to sweep over like thunder and that the East would bend before the storm and sink back in deep thought. The legend is perhaps attractive, and a superficial study of recent events in the East and West makes it appear somewhat true. Unfortunately history does not confirm this. For thousands of years, Asia was the aggressor. Quite often it was Europe which had to bend before the Asian legions passing like a storm, and it is only during the last few generations that the roles have been reversed. Even mild and peace-loving India, which in the past produced so many great thinkers and philosophers, gave birth also to men of action and remarkable fighters. There was no basic difference between the peoples of the East and of the West.

Climate and physical environment are certainly powerful factors in the development of a people. Tradition is even more powerful and the Eastern countries had to follow ancient customs and traditions. The ancient character of their old civilization makes them, to a certain extent, static and little inclined to rapid changes unless they are really forced by circumstances. These factors and many others have no doubt influenced Eastern countries and have given them certain special characteristics which differentiate them from one another as well as from Western countries. But fundamentally there was no basic difference between the East and the West before the advent of the machine age. The West got rapidly industrialized. No such thing happened in the East. The vices and virtues of industrialisation developed fast in the West, whereas the East preserved most of the vices and very few virtues of the previous age. The impact of the industrial West on the East was not advantageous to the latter. It destroyed the economic life of the pre-industrial age and replaced it by nothing better. Its vices grew worse while its virtues decreased. Hence the present society in the East is neither completely industrial nor pre-industrial, but it possesses most of the defects of both these states.

The real difference that we observe today between the East and the modern West was therefore introduced by the industrial age. The virtues of the West are the virtues of industrialisation: science, organization, cooperation, activity; and the so-called virtues and vices of the East are those which, in a large measure, could be found in the West before the machine age.

India, like China, has, in the past, made its special and valuable contribution to thought and civilization. But considering the changing facets of the Indian problem, it is all the more desirable that we get rid of all our pre-conceived ideas of a mysterious, unchangeable East so very different from the West.

## II

It is well-known that the British came to India as traders. They were, at first, humble supplicants before the great Mughal's throne with a request for permission to trade. Gradually they extended their influence and found a very good opportunity for doing so in the confused conditions which followed the fall of the Mughal empire. Politically their power increased and they made good use of it. They not only expanded their trade by more or less legal methods but also adopted a definite policy of extortion and took away immense wealth from India. The assessment is uncertain, and it is really difficult to obtain exact figures; but there is no doubt that during this period of extortion, the British removed without any excuse or justification whatsoever, and without the least return, an enormous part of the wealth accumulated in India.

This drain on Indian wealth had two definite results. First of all it was a big step towards the impoverishment of the country. The more interesting aspect was the help it provided for the industrialisation of Britain. Britain was starting its industrial career. It is known that during the first stages of industrialization of a country, the people face poverty. The old economic life is upset and large sums of money have to be spent on tools and on machinery for production and distribution without any immediate benefit. In this period, the masses become poor; but some relief may be provided if enough capital comes from outside. We are now witnessing the rapid industrialization of Russia, a purely agricultural country, and the lack of external capital—which is not easy to procure—weighs heavily on the people, at least for the time being. Britain passed this phase long ago, but its difficulties were relieved at the time and its industrialization quickened by the large sums of money forcibly removed from India.

At that time India was a country rich in arts and crafts. It had gone well past the stage of a purely agricultural economy, and large urban production and distribution centres were fully developed and attracted the best artisans and workers. The textile industry was very highly developed. Collective production had replaced individual production. Murshidabad and Dacca were large and rich cities which the British, at that time, compared very favourably to their own city of London. There were factories with often more than a hundred workers in each. Up to the beginning of the 19th century Indian cottons and silks were sold in

the British market at a price 50 to 60% lower than that of the fabrics made in Britain. Dacca alone exported muslin worth 300,000 pounds sterling. In fact, the first European traders were attracted to India not by her raw materials but by her finished products. Before the machine age India was therefore as highly developed industrially and commercially as any other country. The spinning and weaving industry was particularly prosperous and there were several millions of weavers. Spinning was a subsidiary occupation to agriculture and took half the time of an average peasant and his family.

The East India Company, which represented the British authority, took pains to destroy these flourishing industries and convert the country into a great consumer of cottons made in Lancashire. It is probable that even without this unjust pressure the local Indian industries could not have withstood for a long time the competition by cheaper products made by machines. This might have happened—as it did in several other countries—at the very beginning of Indian industrialization; but the fact remains that the policy of the British Government was to make India a country producing only raw materials and consuming the products made in Britain. This policy was pursued actively and cruelly by a number of measures. The first step was to stop the export of textiles manufactured in India by taxing them heavily when they entered England. The production cost in India was so low that at the beginning even the mechanical industries of Britain could not compete and had to be protected by duties of 80% and more. Naturally, British products exported to India obtained the greatest facilities and were not taxed. Earlier, India had trade relations with a large number of countries and not only with Asian countries, but these relations stopped gradually when British rule was established and in fact it was only through Britain that India could make contacts with the outside world. Hence the destruction of its trade with Britain meant for India the end of all external trade.

The internal trade, which remained quite large, was paralyzed by transit taxes levied under various forms whenever goods were sent from one part of the country to the other. These taxes were high, but the complications and the risks involved were even higher, and few had the courage to send their goods to other towns or villages.

In addition to these transit taxes the agents of the East India Company subjected the weavers to all sorts of vexations and taxations and forced them to work for the Company's benefit.

Thus the internal trade of India—especially in textiles—was also destroyed. This opened the Indian markets to Lancashire. India therefore helped the industrialization of Britain not only by supplying free capital at a time when India itself needed it most but also by opening a

vast and exclusive market to British products. Since then India has remained the main client of Lancashire.

From the Indian point of view, a more important effect of the destruction of the main local industries was the rapidly developing problem of unemployment. From an industrial country India became almost purely an agricultural one, and millions of craftsmen who had been deprived of their jobs joined the cultivators who were already excessive in number. They could not become cultivators because there was no more land to be distributed. They could only join the unstable ranks of agricultural workers. The cultivators who used to add to their income the benefits derived from spinning activities had to forego this additional income. The average income of the cultivator decreased and the problem of unemployment, or semi-unemployment, became worse. The extreme and increasing poverty of India is very greatly due to this unfortunate situation. The first effects were felt in the largest cities and in the regions near the distribution centres, and this continued until recent times. Gradually even the remote villages were pulled into the orbit of de-industrialisation and became dependent on foreign products. As such dependence became more acute, the wretchedness of the working class increased and they joined the unemployed or turned to agriculture which could not provide subsistence for them all.

It is interesting to compare the first effects of industrialisation in Britain with those in India. In Britain craftsmen and even cultivators were attracted towards the factories; there was an increase in urban population and the cities grew. In India, the deprived artisans found no work anywhere. There were no factories and so they had to return to the land. In India, therefore, the change was just the reverse and the urban population decreased considerably. It is estimated that at the middle of the 18th century about 25% of the Indian population was urban, whereas at the 19th century only 15% lived in cities. In 1770 the population of Dacca was about 200,000; 70 years later it fell to 90,000.

A little later, taxes on Indian exports to British and transit taxes were reduced or cancelled; but they had already crushed the Indian cottage industries which could not develop again in competition with the Lancashire products which were exempted from all taxes.

So India gradually ceased to be a manufacturing country of any importance except for food products and raw materials meant for the foreign manufacturing industries. Most of its huge population turned to agriculture in even greater proportion than in earlier days while, at the same time, areas for cultivation of food products were reduced and reserved for jute and indigo. Though India became more agricultural than ever before, it turned into a passive victim of industrialisation because it had to depend on others for the finished products the country needed.

Hence it suffered all the ills of industrialisation without drawing any of its benefits.

This development continued for long years. The only objective of British policy was to make India an outlet for British industries. No encouragement whatsoever was given to the establishment of modern industry in India. Until recently heavy taxes were imposed on machinery imported into India and the construction of a factory cost 3 to 4 times what it would have cost in Britain, inspite of cheap Indian labour.

This policy lasted until world conditions required a change and a class of people who could no longer be ignored came up in India, insisting that industrial enterprises should be encouraged. But before examining the phases of this new development we must go back and study the other effects of British rule.

### III

Soon after this first period of direct exploitation, the British Government took steps to consolidate its position and spread its influence. Important Government jobs were held by the British but it was neither possible nor economical to bring into India a large number of Englishmen to work as clerks or subordinates. English education, purely of a literary nature, was first imparted with the objective of training Indians for desk work under British officers. This raised a class of intellectuals with modern English education who filled Government offices, particularly in the legal and judicial fields.

The number of clerks and lawyers soon exceeded requirements and since their education did not prepare them for any manual work and also because they generally despised such work, unemployment soon arose in a class of people having a so-called literary background. Created by the British, this class was no doubt linked to them in many ways and depended on them for their work; but it also had in it the germs of revolution.

The business community formed a third category of people between the British manufacturer and the Indian consumer. As British trade grew and prospered in India, a small part of the profits drawn from the exploitation of the country came to this community. Due to his poverty, the cultivator was forced to borrow frequently from businessmen and often had to sell them his product even before the harvest and at a much lower price. Businessmen, therefore, commanded great power in the villages and became rich at the cost of an over-burdened and miserable peasantry.

In the last quarter of the 19th century the great majority of the country's population, therefore, lived on the land and became poorer and

poorer. We also see comparatively restricted groups: the great landlords, mostly dependent of the British, who protected their special privileges; a business community particularly interested in the exploitation of the country by British capital; and intellectuals who had received an English education, were closely linked to British rule but still suffered from various restrictions and incapacities which hindered their growth as a class. These last three classes, participating to a certain extent in the exploitation of the country by the British, were not very keen on bringing British rule to an end.

The whole weight of exploitation fell on the masses whereas most of the profits went to the British people; a small part of these profits was kept back by these three classes of Indians who gradually amassed wealth. In spite of their increasing poverty the masses made no organised effort to fight and get rid of this system which crushed them. There was only sullen resentment and a hopeless submission to a miserable fate. It is always difficult for a dispersed peasantry to combine in efforts for concerted action. After the failure of the great revolution of 1857 organised by the deprived aristocracy, the first attempt against the prevailing state of affairs was made not by the masses but by the middle classes who had received an English education. This resulted in the formation of the Indian National Congress which was, for long years, a very moderate assembly agitating for insignificant political and economic reforms.

Apart from this political movement the main factors leading to opposition to the British were the increasing poverty of the people and the large number of unemployed, not only among the peasantry and artisans but also among the intellectuals who had very few opportunities for employment, the eagerness of the intellectuals to occupy important positions in the Government of the country and the rise of a class accumulating wealth and wishing to invest in industrial enterprises. There were sharp conflicts even among them. The economic situation of the masses does not necessarily improve just because a few more Indians can hold important jobs; nor is it relieved just by an Indian capitalist taking the place of a British capitalist to exploit the country. But the presence of a common enemy — the British Government — brought together these more or less diverse elements; and, at the same time, a strong nationalist feeling developed. In face of the common enemy the social problems of the country fell into the background and it was felt that in any case it was better to be exploited by an Indian than by a foreigner. It was in the interest of the Indian politician to group these various elements in order to present a united front to the foreign government and he did this by under-playing the social problems which separated them. It was also in the interest of the British Government to separate the masses from the rich and educated classes and thus weaken the increasing re-

volutionary trend. The history of India during the second half of the 19th century is a tale of such attempts made on either side. There was a constant effort by the British to buy off the rich or intellectual classes by insignificant reforms to "befriend the moderates", to quote Lord Morley. This somewhat eased their situation but did not really bring a solution to the Indian problem. The British could not really tackle the vital problem of Indian misery, because a comprehensive solution of this problem required a complete change of the whole system and meant the end of the exploitation of the masses for the benefit of England. They therefore made half-hearted compromises and by offering small packages of reforms often succeeded in detaching one class or one group from the national movement. This was no surprise because the movement was controlled by the rich classes who to some extent benefited from these reforms.

So the end of the 19th century saw a few insignificant and purely political reforms; and then came the reforms of Minto-Morley in 1909 and the reforms of Montagu-Chelmsford in 1919. In 1909 the so-called reforms, though very nominal, could win over a large number of leaders of the Congress; but a strong minority remained undeterred and faced the usual methods of repression. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 had a different fate because the national movement had by then gradually reached the masses, and it was not easy for a few leaders to compromise with the Government, in opposition to the general feeling. These "reforms" came after the Great War. However the revolutionary feeling against British rule had increased and took the form of the nonco-operation movement led by Gandhi. For the first time this movement brought the masses into the political arena and was sufficiently strong to shake the foundations of British rule.

The Government made some more concessions in an effort to divide the nationalists. But India was no longer in a mood for compromises and was determined to get full freedom and nothing less. She refused half-measures. The national movement did not achieve its objective immediately and was followed by a reaction which strengthened the British hold over India. But, all the same, the noncooperation movement did liberate and activate the forces which were destined to play an increasingly important role in the future struggles of India.

#### IV

The political movement developed alongside changes in Indian economic conditions and was closely connected with them. In the second half of the 19th century heavy industry developed slowly in spite of all the obstacles placed by the Government. The wealth collected by the

business community and a few intellectuals was partly invested in landed property, but the land was over-burdened and yielded no appreciable return. This capital investment was therefore directed towards industrial enterprises, particularly cotton mills. To stop this development the Government taxed the products of these mills and created a remarkable situation: contrary to the normal course of events, the Indian Government protected foreign goods and taxed local products of Indian origin.

In spite of a few depressions the slow progress of industrialisation was maintained. The large metallurgical works of Tata were installed on a wide scale without any assistance or encouragement whatsoever from the Government.

The War brought great changes and the Government helped the Indian industries out of sheer necessity. The Government took particular interest in the Tata metallurgical industries which had been neglected so far. It also helped the cotton industry by imposing a 3½% tax on imported cottons, mainly because Japan was capturing a part of the Indian market. Capital immediately rushed towards the textile industry. During the War and immediately afterwards, cotton and jute mills made enormous profits (most of the jute mills were owned by Englishmen). The average dividend in 1920 was from 120 to 140% and the maximum 365% for cotton and 400% for jute. The Indian capitalists thus accumulated new wealth and gained such a strong position that it was difficult to dislodge them.

The War therefore brought a great change in the economic policy of England in India; and this was characterized by the nomination of the Industrial Commission of 1916. With the Japanese competition and the increasing strength of Indian capital and industry it was no longer possible to maintain the old obstructive attitude towards industrialisation. This would have amounted to forcing the richer classes into the revolutionary movement which was growing stronger and more conscious. The lesson of the war provides another good reason for the change in policy. No country can successfully fight a war if it depends too much on other countries for its subsistence and armaments. During the Great War Britain escaped disaster only because she could keep control over the seas. In view of recent developments in the air force, gases and submarines one wonders if this success can be repeated. But even if Britain succeeds in protecting its trade routes, it is not very probable that during war time it can supply to India all the requirements for active war. A future war between Britain and Russia is not improbable. It is in Asia and particularly on the Indian frontiers that such a war would take place. India, the main theatre of the battle, has to be capable of producing all the requirements of such a war fought in the name of British imperialism. So military strategy made it imperative that India

become an industrial country and British policy was forced to change direction and help such industrialisation.

Another factor which explains this decision is the miserable condition of British trade and industry. This is due to several reasons. Britain had reached a high level of industrial development without any substantial internal scope of expansion, and this led to over-production. The industrialisation of other countries also reduced the external market; attempts to decrease salaries and increase working hours led to agitations and strikes; finally, general world conditions were unfavourable. For more profitable investments British capital started looking to other places where salaries were lower, working hours longer, and trade unions not sufficiently developed to create trouble to the employers. British capital therefore flowed to India, China and other countries and became the dominating factor of Indian industrialisation, taking to Britain a major part of the profits. But since it was difficult to completely ignore the Indian capitalist, he was treated as a "junior" associated in the exploitation of the country.

The British Government was sufficiently far-sighted to sacrifice a temporary gain in order to ensure future benefits and retain India as long as possible. Two years ago it abolished taxes on Indian cotton in order to help the Indian cotton industries even at the expense of Lancashire. Imports of British textiles decreased but imports of machinery increased. At present India insists on greater protection for its cotton industries but the Government has so far refused.

In 1922 an Excise Committee was appointed in India. It recommended special protection to certain Indian industries and, wherever possible without loss, it recommended an "imperial preference". It also favoured the free access of foreign capital and a quick progress of industry. An idea of this rapid progress is given by the fact that in the International Labour Organization India is now among the first eight industrial countries of the world. In 1920 it was estimated that India employed 20 million workers in her industry.

Before the war 70% of textile goods came from Britain and 28% were made in India. After the war the percentage was 35 for Britain and 61 for India. The same progress can be noticed in extractive industries. In 1908 the ore production was 8 million pounds sterling; in 1920 it was 30 million.

The industrial development can be represented by the capitals invested:

Pre-war new capital:	12 million pounds
In 1918-1919	183 million pounds
In 1919-1920	100 million pounds

These figures give a slightly exaggerated idea because in 1918-1920 there was a sharp rise followed by a depression. However, these figures do indicate a very great industrial growth.

To a great extent, this extraordinary industrial development is not due to Indian capital. British capital is predominant — probably 90% of the capital of commercial firms operating in India is British; and the same is also true for the big shareholders. Therefore the protection of Indian industries as recommended and partly executed by the Excise Commission in fact amounts to the protection of British shares and British capital in India.

Recently the British Government appointed a Commission to investigate the possibilities of improving agricultural methods in India. It is in the interest of the British Government that agriculture yields as much as possible and there is certainly a very wide scope for improving the methods used in India.

The Commission may suggest some minor improvements but it is recognized that it will not touch on the essential point, the burning question of Indian agriculture.

The mechanization of agriculture can increase production but its immediate effect would be to create unemployment. In any case industry is developing in India and new factories are coming up on all sides. But whatever the rate of this industrialisation it will take a long time to absorb the large number of unemployed persons and it will be incapable of providing work to those who have been deprived of their jobs by the machines. The unemployed can have a satisfactory status only if a new agricultural policy is established. In the meantime, it is known that Gandhi is a great champion of cottage industries and particularly hand-spinning. He devotes a part of his time, and with considerable success, in reviving this old custom whereby the cultivators had been utilising their leisure in spinning, thus adding to their income from the land. This provides work to the weavers who are still present in large numbers and at the same time decreases the Indian consumption of foreign fabrics from Lancashire. It appears strange and unreasonable to attempt the revival of hand-spinning in these days of machinery. But it should be remembered that spinning is not being recommended as the main full-time occupation, but as a profitable way of utilising the spare time of the peasant and his family. The income from cultivation is so low that the peasant welcomes even a small additional 'income.' There is no difficulty in starting spinning on a large scale. It requires little or no capital and the necessary skill is easy to acquire. Wherever spinning has been organised on a large scale it has brought definite relief to the cultivators and to the artisans who were in the process of disappearing. Even if industries grow very fast

in India it does appear that for a long time to come, this cottage industry can play an important role as an auxiliary to agriculture.

## V

Thus British policy changed continuously and adapted itself to new circumstances. To possess and keep India has been the main objective of British external policy: control over the Suez canal and Egypt, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, her policy in China and in Persia are only a few examples. Without India the British Empire falls to the second rank and in fact ceases to be an empire. It is therefore essential for Britain to keep India at any cost, even, if need be, by sharing part of her power and profits with certain classes in India. It is believed that a concession made in good time can avoid disaster.

Today British policy appears to be based on the assumption that a future war is inevitable in the East — probably against Russia and perhaps against Japan and China. The great naval base of Singapore which is being built is only a military base against China and Japan. Fear of Russia and opposition to her are traditional in Britain and today the constant troubles between these two powers are due less to communism than to this old political rivalry. Communism plays its role to the extent that it attacks imperialism and spreads ideas undermining the so-called moral foundations of British rule in India.

There are many other signs indicating that much thought is being given to this war. It is now proposed to keep a large contingent of the British army in India. It is felt that the old expeditionary force which was sent to Belgium at the beginning of the Great War of 1914 is no longer required in Europe and should be stationed in India where there is greater need for it. Frequent references were made to troop movements in Burma towards the Chinese frontier.

If a war breaks out in the East, India must necessarily play a decisive role in it. A country rising against British rule and trying to get rid of it will not only hamper such a war but will obstruct all British plans. A satisfied or partly satisfied India could be of great help to Britain. The problem for Britain is therefore to maintain its hold on India and at the same time induce her to help in the war.

During the last eight years there has been continuous conflict in India between the nationalists and the Government. The nationalists failed and the Government appears to be more stable than ever. However, in spite of their weakness, the nationalists have not made many concessions to the Government, though some individuals or groups may be ready to do so. It is in the interest of the British Government to buy peace at any cost, before the situation is put to the test by the course

of events. If the Government is pressed it will grant almost anything. But before that it will try, as in the past, all possible means of repression and division of the nationalists. It will also try all means of weakening and depressing them to such an extent as to make them agree to a compromise settlement. In the near future the Government will play the role that it has already played: it will try repression to crush the extremists and new reforms to appease the moderates. The economic policy is meant to win over the rich classes. Princes and proprietors are bound to England by the heavy chains of personal interest. It is rumoured that new proposals are being made more or less to separate the Princes from the rest of India and place them under the direct control of the British Cabinet, thus creating in India an isolated block, which will be of great danger to the future unity of the country.

## VI

It is difficult to predict whether the Government will succeed in winning over a large part of the rich and intellectual classes. In the best of conditions its success will probably be very limited. But even if it succeeded in winning over the majority of these rich classes, it should be remembered that they form only a very small percentage of the population — 2 to 3% — and many of them are not prepared for any petty compromise. The real test will be the attitude of the masses. Even if a small part becomes active — in fact their agitation is quite obvious today — their weight will be felt. During the 170 years of British rule the exploited class and the real victims were the masses and the fact that a few more Indians occupy high positions in the Government or a few more capitalists receive greater dividends makes little difference to them. From time to time we hear of famines in India but we do not realise that a state of famine is continuous in certain regions. This is referred to as "scarcity" and called famine only if millions of people die within a short time. It should also be remembered that in earlier times, famines were caused by shortage of food products in the affected region and the lack of communications to bring food from elsewhere; this difficulty does not exist nowadays. There is food in the country and there are railways and other means of transport. Food products are available but they cannot be bought and it is very true that during a famine period, grain was being exported to other countries. The present famine is a famine of money and not of food; a terrible poverty that India must envisage and endure, a poverty which caused the death of 12 million people during the influenza epidemic and which lowered the average age of the Indian from 30 years in 1882 to 22 years in 1921 and raised the death rate during the same period from 24 per 100 to 31.

Some figures and quotations from official reports will give a better idea of the poverty problem in India. It was already indicated that the main cause of this poverty was the over-burdening of the lands as a direct result of British policy. In 1880, the official Famine Committee stated:

"The poverty of the Indian people and the risks to which it is exposed in the famine periods are due to the regrettable fact that agriculture is almost the sole occupation of the masses".

In 1911, the official Indian census report stated:

"There is no doubt that the percentage of the population living on agriculture increases rapidly. The profits of several classes of artisans have decreased due to the growing competition by machine-made products in the country or imported from outside and consequently these classes tend to abandon their traditional occupations in favour of agriculture".

The following are authoritative figures from the latest census reports, when the return to the land was less pronounced than earlier:

Census Year	Percentage of population living on agriculture
1891	61%
1901	66%
1911	72%
1921	73%

The report on the investigation of Dr. H. H. Mann, Director of Agriculture in Bombay in 1917, on the condition of villages in the south is a significant document.<sup>2</sup> He found in the case of a single village, that the average area of a property was 40 acres in 1771, 17½ in 1818, 14 in 1821-1840 and only 7 in 1915. He concluded that in the most favourable conditions, 81% of the lands could not feed the land-owner and this calculation was based on the lowest possible expenditure rate excluding even the cost of artificial light. Out of 103 families, he found only 8 in a reasonable economic condition according to this poor standard of living; 28 could live only by working in a neighbouring factory and thus ensuring an extra income; and 67 i.e. 65% could not meet their requirements in spite of income from the lands as well as extra earnings from outside.

2. Dr. Harold Mann, principal of the agricultural college at Poona and later Director of Agriculture in the Bombay Presidency 1907-1927, conducted a number of investigations into agricultural conditions in India.

In a second village which had no factory nearby, he found that 85% of the people could not meet their requirements.

Dr. Mann also states that in the first village the interest of debt amounted to 2500 rupees on a sum of 12000 rupees, representing the net income from the lands. In the second village the interest was 6700 rupees and the net income 14000. This leaves hardly any money to pay interest on debts unless the amount is drawn from what can be considered as essential expenses. These figures relate to debts in normal times. During years of famine or of some other calamities, debts increased in very alarming proportions.

Dr. Mann indicates that the average rent paid to the proprietors represents half of what a cultivator could earn if he owned the land. In the case of Zamindaris (large properties) the rent is much higher.

He concludes his investigation with the following statement: "At present, it appears that the condition of the Indian village is declining steadily".

These figures reveal the terrible poverty of the peasant. The condition of the worker who is not the land-owner is still worse. Agricultural over-population is sometimes attributed to the peace and prosperity brought by British rule. In fact, India's population is not increasing at anything like the rate in European countries.

Professor Brij Narain<sup>3</sup>, author of the book entitled *Population of India*, states that during the last 30 years the cultivated area for food products has increased at a lower rate than the population. It is certain therefore that the people were under-fed. The fault lies with the entire agricultural system and unless a complete change is effected the tragic condition of the masses in India cannot be improved.

## VII

It is often argued that the backward and miserable condition of the Indian masses is mainly due to its social customs and harmful superstitions. It is true that the Indian people suffer from such customs and that they are superstitious. But customs and superstitions can be eradicated only by education and the steps taken by the Government in this field are such that after 170 years, hardly 10% of the population is literate whereas in Japan, for example, the percentage is 95. Expenditure on education in 1919-1920 amounted to 12.6 million pounds i.e., 11 pence per head whereas in England it was 85 million pounds, which amounts to 2 pounds per head.

3. (1889-1947); Professor of Economics at Sanatan Dharm College, Lahore for many years. His book *Population of India* was published in 1925.

Medical facilities are almost nil in certain regions and sanitary conditions are extremely poor. Malaria is rampant while it is generally admitted that it could be eradicated by suitable measures. It is quite difficult to fight the evils of a harmful tradition transmitted from ancient times, but energetic steps can succeed. The British Government in India was not serious about this — except perhaps a few officers in their individual capacity. For those Government offices which strengthened its hold on the country and facilitated exploitation the British Government showed remarkable comprehension and built very efficient administrative machinery. But when it was a question of "building" the nation, the energy and will were lacking and the constant excuse was the lack of funds. Funds were not lacking to maintain a very expensive army in excessive size or for increasing the salaries of government officers.

The contact with the West and the economic development have produced new forces in India which deeply undermine the country's ancient customs. This evolution will continue. But it is strange that the British Government in India, unconsciously perhaps, played the role of a conservative factor in the social evolution of India. Hindu society and Hindu law were always governed by changing customs; a law ceased to prevail when it was proved that it was obsolete in a certain part of the country or of the community and it was replaced by new customs more in tune with our times. Therefore Hindu society was, on the whole, progressive and could adapt itself to changing conditions. But it became somewhat rigid to a certain extent because of the Muslims, and more so because of the British domination. The British codified these customs and flexible laws on very conservative principles. It then became impossible to change these customs and laws except by fresh legislation. Any attempt to introduce such legislation met forceful opposition from the conservative elements of Hindu society and the Government took their side to remain in their favour. It was difficult to create a mass opinion capable of influencing the Government to bring about changes in the laws because an illiterate mass crushed by poverty is inert by nature.

### VIII

We have examined the main stages of the development of British policy. We have seen how India was first converted into a consumer country by the destruction of her cottage industries, and how later British capital industrialised India for its own profit. We have seen that as a result of this policy most of the people turned to agriculture which considerably increased the poverty of the country. The insignificant political reforms made from time to time do not touch the core of the problem and though they are profitable to a part of the rich classes they do not

improve the condition of the masses. The problem cannot be solved unless imperialist exploitation is brought to an end.

This will happen only when the masses, who are the people who suffer most, become conscious of the situation. They appear to be near such an awakening. Peasant associations and industrial trade unions are gradually being formed and when they have gained some strength, they will to a great extent, control the political movement. At that time the movement will be too powerful and too wide for the British Government to try to resist or to break by repression or by the offer of some reforms. Faced with the danger, the British will offer what is known as Dominion Status but it is doubtful if this will satisfy the Indian people. Dominion type government will not put an end to the exploitation of the masses by the British capitalists and will not bring any relief to them.

There cannot be peace between India and England unless India becomes completely independent.

### 43. A Foreign Policy for India<sup>1</sup>

To some of us in India it may appear a foolish waste of time to indulge in fancies about a foreign policy for India. Our national movement is at an ebb and the country appears to be rent into many factions — religious, economic and political. Efforts are being made to bridge the gulf between the Hindu and the Muslim and to bring the various political groups under one banner. Laudable as these efforts are they seldom appear to take into consideration the fundamental causes of disunion or lay much stress on the underlying principles which only can form the basis of effective political action. Unity is good and worth striving for with all our might, but only if it is based on principles which matter and which are believed in. A patched up unity at the cost of principles can only be followed by disruption at the moment of crisis and consequent disaster. It is bad ethics and worse policy. It is no waste of time, therefore, for us to consider some of these principles and the wider aspects of the Indian problem.

1. 13 September 1927. A.I.C.C. File No. 8, 1927, pp. 1—27. N.M.M.L.

It is not easy to consider these wider aspects during a period of internal trouble when we are only too conscious of our many weaknesses, and our seeming helplessness makes us lose heart and clutch at straws. Many of us begin to attach more importance to what we can get immediately than to what we should aim at and strive for. Strong language continues to be used but it is often a cloak for a sinking heart. We talk of ultimatums and minimum demands when probably we mean something very different. The prospect of a statutory commission agitates us considerably and we discuss its personnel and how many, if any, Indians are likely to be on it, and in the same breath we disdainfully reject the right of the British Parliament or any outside authority to determine our future. These and a hundred other signs are but the outward symptoms of the tumult that is going on in our heads and hearts. It is natural that it is so. Nonetheless it makes it a little difficult to consider calmly and dispassionately, and apart from the troubles of the moment, the fundamental problems that India has to solve.

We suffered a setback after the noncooperation movement and the reaction grows and we sink deeper and deeper into the trough. Let us remember however that we are not the solitary victims of reaction. Europe and America are equally its victims. The war and the Russian Revolution, like the great French Revolution, let loose strange forces and vitalized the elements of progress throughout the world. But in this very process, they also called out all that was reactionary, and today in a great part of Europe dictators reign and even the so-called democratic countries support them and admire them. In Europe, as in India during the noncooperation movement and after, we have had the flush of freedom followed by reaction. Does this mean that in Europe the progressive movements are essentially weaker than they were before, or that fewer people support them? Few will say so if they have any knowledge of the peoples and politics of Europe. These movements are more widespread and stronger than they have ever been and it is really the fear of their strength that has rallied the forces of reaction. It was easier for these latter to organise themselves; the existing system helps them, governments are their staunch supporters, and their resources in money and publicity are tremendous. So today they are masters of the situation, but they know that the potential strength of the others is greater, and the fear of this drives them into greater excesses of reaction. Europe has the appearance of an armed camp today, with the two groups facing each other. One, highly organised, is in an entrenched citadel fully stocked with ammunition; the other disunited is in the wilderness, but potentially it is far stronger and common suffering is welding it into a powerful and strongly knit group. But because the latter group is disunited and weak today it is not losing sight of its aims

and ideals. It sticks to them with greater intensity and fervour knowing well that real relief cannot come through any patchwork compromise.

India today bears a striking analogy to Europe. The Government is strong and we are weak and disunited. And yet no close observer can say that the spread of the national movement is less today than it was even at the height of the noncooperation movement. Extraneous causes may weaken us for the moment and we may waste our strength and energy in mutual conflict, but the solid fabric built up by the blood and suffering of tens of thousands remains and must endure. Let us not forget that our potential strength is greater than that of our opponents. The only danger we have to face is not from our opponents but from our friends, who, feeling disheartened and hopeless, may barter away our future for a paltry compromise. It is all the more necessary therefore that we should clearly envisage the problems we have to solve and the methods of their solution.

## II

What are these problems? There are many but the four principal ones appear to be: the question of minorities, our future economic structure, our social problem, and our foreign relations.

A consideration of the minorities problem will include the Hindu-Muslim question, the Brahmana and the non-Brahmana, the Sikhs and the smaller minorities. We shall have to see how far the existing friction is due to economic causes and to what extent merely to religious intolerance and bigotry. The latter will involve a comparison with other countries and would lead us to the regrettable conclusion that our country, with its age-long reputation for religious tolerance, is today the worst example of intolerance and bigotry. It will be for us to consider whether this narrow outlook and religiosity can be eradicated by cautious compromises between rival superstitions or by a frontal attack on all superstition and bigotry, wherever it may be.

Our second problem — the future economic structure of our country — raises the vital issue which is convulsing Europe today. Are we to aim at a continuation of the capitalist regime in India, or some form of socialism, or something else which is different from either of these? This will largely influence our constitution and our methods of government. It will also necessitate a consideration of the causes of Indian poverty, of the terrible over-pressure on land, of land tenure and land revenue. We are apt to imagine that with the withdrawal of British political control the "drain" of India's wealth will cease. We forget that the amount that India pays in the shape of salaries and pensions and the bank charges and the like is only a small part of her tribute, and it is

quite conceivable that even self-government may not stop the exploitation of the country, unless it is followed by a change in our economic structure.

The third problem deals with our social evils and raises vital issues which must be faced and boldly tackled. Katherine Mayo's notorious book, *Mother India*<sup>2</sup>, has broadcast the most amazing generalizations and calumnies about our country. It would be easy enough for any one so minded to write a similar book about France or England or America, and by picking out the most disgusting facts from the records of the police courts and the files of Sunday journals to point to the conclusion that it was a loathsome country, past all redemption. And yet everyone knows that this would be a false caricature and a calumny, and that France and England and America have a great deal that is admirable and noble and worth acquiring. It is difficult for an Indian to read Katherine Mayo's book without anger and resentment. No person, Indian or foreigner, who has any knowledge of India, can read the vile charges brought against our people as a whole, without knowing from his personal experience that they are false. The book is a particularly mean and disgraceful effort at propaganda, and yet I should like as many Indians as possible to read it. We have our plague spots. Let us face them squarely and root them all out.

The fourth and the last problem for us to consider is that of foreign policy. I propose only to deal with this here and not with the other three, although it is difficult to separate questions which are so intimately connected. Our foreign relations will include our relations with England and her empire, now called the British Commonwealth of Nations.

### III

We know that India was intimately connected in past ages with the countries of the East and even with some Western countries. Gradually these connections dwindled and with the coming of the British they almost ceased. Political reasons and the development of the sea routes to Europe brought us into greater touch with England but isolated us from the rest of the world. As the national movement in India took shape our leaders attempted to carry on propaganda in England. It was hoped thus to convince the British public of the righteousness of our cause and it was expected that fair dealing would follow this conviction.

2. Katherine Mayo was an American author who sought to show that India was socially backward and therefore unfit for freedom. Her book was written with the active assistance of British officials in London and India.

The expected did not happen and a revulsion followed. The Nagpur Congress in 1920 wound up the British Committee<sup>3</sup> of the Congress and the weekly newspaper *India* and practically declared itself against all propaganda in England. It was a natural and inevitable step. We had grown in self-consciousness and the axiom was laid down that only by developing internal strength could we achieve our goal. During our intensive campaign in India we forgot England and the rest of the world. Yet the strange result was that we had far more publicity in the press of the world than we had ever had before and the name of Gandhi, as representing our movement, became almost a household word in Europe and America. As the noncooperation movement became weaker, India ceased to occupy the columns of western newspapers. The wisdom of the Nagpur Congress decision was thus amply justified and it became clear that the best propaganda in foreign countries was effective action at home.

Many attempts have been made in recent years to induce the Congress to take up foreign propaganda, and although some resolutions favouring it have been adopted, little has been done. It has been rightly felt that our energy and money can be better employed at home. But the question we have now to consider is not one of propaganda to gain the sympathy of others but one of ending the isolation in which India has lived for generations and of developing contacts with other parts of the world. Whether we wish it or not India cannot remain, now or hereafter, cut off from the rest of the world. No country can do so. The modern world is too closely knit together to permit of such isolation. The Arcos raid<sup>4</sup> in London is followed by a murder in Warsaw and many executions in Moscow, and has its reverberations on the North-West Frontier of India. France, the most intensely national of countries, cannot have a minister who interferes too much with the plans of high finance of New York. M. Caillaux<sup>5</sup> falls because Wall Street does not approve of him; M. Poincare succeeds because Wall Street helps him to do so. We talk of labour and socialist internationals but the greatest and most powerful international organisations today are

3. The Committee was wound up in 1921 in accordance with the resolution passed by the Nagpur Congress in December 1920 as not being in keeping with the policy of noncooperation adopted by the Congress.

4. In May 1927 the British police raided the office of Arcos, the Soviet Trading Corporation in London, and although no evidence of illegal activities was found, the incident caused embitterment and led to the termination of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

5. Joseph Caillaux (1863-1944); Finance Minister of France, who was forced to resign twice, in 1925 and 1926.

those of capital and finance which control the governments of even so-called democratic countries and bring about war and peace. The American marines take possession of Nicaragua because Messrs. Brown Brothers of New York have money invested there. Cuba is not fit for independence, says President Coolidge, but all the world knows that her unfitness is due to the presence of rubber which American capitalists covet. China cannot be free because too much British and Japanese capital is locked up there.

India cannot keep apart from this tangled web, and her refusing to take heed of it may indeed lead her to disaster. We must understand world movements and politics and fashion our own movement accordingly. This cannot mean that we have to subordinate our interests or our methods of work to those of any other country or organisation. Nor does it mean that we should expect any help from outside or slacken our efforts at home. It simply means that we must educate ourselves in problems of world polity so that we may be able to serve our country better. It means that whenever possible we may take part in international joint action when this is to our advantage. It means also that we should gradually train a body of men and women who can be relied upon to serve Indian interests abroad when the power for doing this comes into our hands. Let us remember that there are many countries and many peoples who suffer as India does today. They have to face the same problems as ours and it must be to the advantage of both of us to know more of each other and to cooperate where possible. There may not be many opportunities of such cooperation but an obvious instance is an internationally organised boycott of goods.

The Congress took a step in this direction by taking part officially in the Brussels Congress against Imperialism and a further step by becoming associated with the League against Imperialism. These steps were important. It is difficult at present to appreciate fully their far-reaching character, but we may measure it to some extent by the wrath of the British Government and their propagandists against the League.

#### IV

What is the position of the Indian in foreign countries today? Apart from a few students and others, he has gone either as a coolie or as a mercenary soldier on behalf of England. As a coolie he is looked down upon with contempt and as a hireling of the exploiters he is hated. Indian soldiers and the police have been used by the British Government to further its own interests in China, Egypt, Abyssinia, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, Tibet, Syria, Afghanistan and Burma, and wherever they have gone they have made the name of India hated. In Burma one can understand the grievance of some people against their

exploitation by the British and Indians and their desire to separate from India. In Mesopotamia our countrymen hold the country for the British and also join in the process of exploitation. Even in Annam, I am told by friends, the Indian community always sides with the French Government against the Annamese and, in the elections for a deputy for the French Chamber, cast their votes for the official nominee. In Shanghai the most hated are the Indian police who are made to do the dirty work of their imperial masters. It is not surprising, regrettable as it may be, that the Indian is not loved in those very countries which suffer a common fate with us and which should be our friends and allies. It is for the Congress to develop these contacts and to strive unceasingly for the withdrawal of all Indian armies and police from foreign countries. On the occasion of the despatch of Indian forces to Shanghai, the Viceroy declared that they were being sent to protect Indian interests in China. We have no interests there or anywhere which require the protection of armed force, and even if we had such interests it is better for them to suffer than to be protected at the point of the bayonet. The only interests we wish to develop in any country are such as are acceptable to the people of that country.

## V

What then should India aim at? What manner of Swaraj are we struggling for? Some talk of independence and some of a membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and many are prepared to accept the latter because it appears to be the less difficult of achievement. And yet this very argument means that if a full measure of independence was, in their opinion, obtainable, they would prefer it. Independence, on the other hand, may mean very little if it is of the type which prevails in Egypt today, with a foreign army of occupation to overawe the National Parliament and British cruisers to enforce the decisions of the British Cabinet.

India cannot strive for anything less than the fullest freedom to develop as she will; she must control her finances, her military forces and her foreign relations. Any other ideal would be beneath her dignity and not worth the sacrifices that we have made or may be called upon to make in the future. She may if she chooses, and I trust she will so choose, agree to give up a measure of her freedom of action to an international body of which she is a member for the sake of world peace. But she can only do so if other nations also agree to limit their sovereignty in like measure. It is becoming increasingly clear that international peace cannot be founded if each nation jealously guards its full sovereignty, and the League of Nations which sits at Geneva is proving

a dismal failure because the governments of Europe do not desire peace and will not even agree to compulsory arbitration. The League is indeed the plaything of a few great powers in Europe and its chief purpose is to protect the existing rights of these powers. Under its very constitution it is bound to safeguard the status quo, and India and other countries in a like predicament, suffering from the status quo and desiring it changed, can expect less than nothing from the League. It is an obstacle in their path cleverly designed to delude them and to waylay them. But should a real League of Nations arise working for peace and taking the necessary guarantees for peace from its component members, India should gladly join and agree to all such guarantees.

## VI

Does the membership of the British group of nations as it is today promise India the full measure of freedom which we consider as essential? The British Empire, except for India and other dependencies, is becoming more and more nebulous. It is held temporarily together chiefly by the sentiment of its component members, but signs of disruption are evident enough. South Africa openly and continuously pulls in a contrary direction and advocates separation; Canada, and in a lesser degree Australia, gravitate economically and culturally towards the United States. It is certain that in case of an armed conflict between England and the United States, Canada and probably Australia, will cut away from the former and join the States. Such a conflict, though unlikely, is by no means impossible as the recent failure of the naval disarmament conference<sup>6</sup> clearly shows. But even if England and the United States should not war against each other, only an optimist, who is blind to all that is happening around us, can say that another great war in the not distant future is unlikely. If any such war comes the British Empire will hardly emerge from it as an Empire. For the present, however, it holds together largely because of sentimental ties and common economic interests. In the case of India there can be no sentimental tie based on common origin and culture; indeed the sentiment will be of an opposite kind. Still less is there any common economic interest. There is bound to be continuous friction and India will either have to break through or be coerced into an unwilling agreement with a policy against her interests.

6 In 1921 Britain, the United States, Japan, France and Italy had agreed on a ratio among themselves of capital ships; but an attempt in 1927 to fix a similar ratio for other types of ships ended in failure, France and Italy refusing to attend the conference at Geneva and Britain and the United States failing to reach agreement.

It is not conceivable that India can remain within the British group of nations and yet be mistress of her destiny.

What does the British Commonwealth stand for today? In its domestic policy we see colour and racial prejudice and the doctrine that the white man must be supreme even in countries where he forms a small minority. South Africa offers the most flagrant example of this, but Canada and Australia are equally strong believers in this doctrine. In Kenya and the adjacent territories it is now proposed to create a new federation or dominion with all the power in the hands of a few white settlers, who can do what they will to the large numbers of Indians and the overwhelming African population. Can India associate herself with this group and be a party to colour bar legislation and the exploitation and humiliation of her own sons and the races of Africa?

In the domain of international politics England occupies a still clearer position. She is the bully of all Eastern nations striving to be free and an enemy of all progressive movements. In China her armies and fleets and aeroplanes try to hamper and break up the national movement; her army keeps the Egyptians in their proper place and her cruisers are ever ready to bombard. In Europe she is the friend of every dictator, whether it be in Italy or Spain or Hungary or Greece. Even in the League of Nations her attitude is always the most conservative, and only lately we have seen that one of her own leading delegates, Lord Robert Cecil,<sup>7</sup> has had to resign because he considered that his Government did not strive for peace. Today England is without doubt the most reactionary force in the world. Partly this is due to the comic opera government which she has had the misfortune to possess for some years, but the chief cause is one which will endure. She has had too long a spell of Empire not to be corrupted by it and it will take time to live this down.

Is India to put herself in this group which represents reaction and suppression of struggling peoples and nations? It would be an immoral act and a crime against the freedom of all who are oppressed. But is it conceivable that India can ever be an equal member of the British Commonwealth? It is an old argument, but worth repeating, that if India ever became such a member, she would, by virtue of her vast population and her tremendous latent resources, inevitably become the predominant partner in the group. The British Commonwealth would be dominated by India and the centre of gravity would shift from London to Delhi. No one can imagine that England or the dominions will put up with this. They would far prefer that India was out of their group. It would

7. (1864-1958); a staunch supporter of the League of Nations, Lord Robert Cecil (later Viscount Cecil of Chelwood) resigned from the British Cabinet in 1927.

be easier to deal with her as an independent power rather than as a boss of their own concern.

It is thus difficult to conceive of a free India in the British Commonwealth. It is however quite possible to think of her as a nominal member of this group without an effective voice in important matters of domestic or foreign policy, financially a thrall of London, and being made to play the imperialist game at the bidding, and for the benefit, of England.

On vital matters she will always have to give in, her economic interests will suffer, and whether she wants it or not, she will have to put up with the capitalist exploitation of her masses. This is something very far from freedom and no definition of Swaraj, however feeble it may be, can be made to fit in with it. Those who advocate some kind of Dominion Status for India must realise its implications. It can only mean a continued subjection for India. There are only two alternatives for us and no possibility of a third — remaining a subject country and gaining complete independence.

We thus see that there is no possible place for our country in the British group of nations and it is idle to talk of India becoming a member of this group. The only possible goal we can have is one of full independence. This does not mean friction or enmity with England. We shall want peace and peaceful relations with all countries and we shall gladly welcome England as a friend if she chooses to meet us halfway, in spite of her previous record in India. Indeed friendship between England and India is only possible after India has broken the British connection. No friendship can be based on compulsion.

## VII

It is often stated that we cannot defend ourselves and if England left us to our resources another foreign power would invade us and take possession of our country. And so some would argue that England should continue to defend but leave us internal freedom. Those who contend thus seldom realise the inevitable implications and consequences of their argument. With the defence forces under foreign control and an alien army of occupation always present, what measure of freedom can we enjoy? The ultimate authority will always rest with the foreigner and the nominal liberty we may possess will be hedged and circumscribed and not worth a day's purchase. Our very armies, controlled by foreign authority, will be used, as they have been used in the past, to thwart and oppress us. Some of us imagine, taking leave of the teachings of history and common sense, that the English will help us to build up our defence forces. They will indeed help to build them but they will be

tools in their hands, meant to protect their interests against ours, and a perpetual obstacle in our path. Our position indeed may become worse and more pitiable than it is even today.

But even if it were possible for us to come to an arrangement with England so that she might defend us, would it not be a shameful and humiliating position for us? With what dignity or self-respect can we ask a foreigner to protect our honour or our interests? It is an amazing proposition, born of fear and timidity — worthy only of a people utterly devoid of manhood and the qualities which go to make a nation. If there is any truth in it then indeed we are wholly unfitted for freedom.

We have our Skeen Committees<sup>8</sup> and the like making feeble proposals which might result in the course of generations in Indianising a part of the army, and we have the patience to discuss these proposals with gravity. And yet the Government will not agree even to these. We seem to have forgotten that only ten years ago huge armies grew up and officers by tens of thousands were trained within some months in almost every country of Europe. When the need arose there were no Skeen Committees appointed to take a leisurely view of affairs and make suggestions for the generations to come. If England or France had acted then as the Government of India is acting now, the war would not have lasted long and would have had a very different conclusion. India with her man power and tremendous resources can solve the question of defence within a year or two if her Government and people really want to do so. A national Government faced with the immediate responsibility of strengthening and protecting the country will do more within twelve months than the present Government will do within half a century. We have an efficient Indian army today but it is officered by the British. This army can become the nucleus of our defence organisation. Many of the non-commissioned officers can be promoted to commissioned ranks and steps can immediately be taken to train more officers. During the period of transition we shall welcome the aid of foreign officers as experts, English if they are prepared to serve us. If the English are not so prepared, there is no lack of others — French, Germans, Russians or Japanese. Indeed in the continent of Europe the English officer has no high reputation.

But war today is becoming more and more mechanised — a thing of tanks and aeroplanes and gas bombs. The infantry soldier and the cavalryman will soon be as much out of place in it as the man of

8. The Skeen Committee was set up by the Government of India to consider Indianisation of the Indian Army. Motilal Nehru and Jinnah were among its members.

armour with a lance and a battle axe. By the time the present Government of India gets to work and produces a few toy Indian officers, smartly dressed and well up in all the rules of parade, they will be about as useful to us as the ancient warriors with bows and arrows.

We shall of course do our utmost to make our defence forces efficient and capable of resisting all possible attacks. But our main strength will lie in our peaceful and friendly policy towards all countries and in the spirit of our people. We shall covet nobody's land or goods and there is no reason why we should have enemies outside. If we are successful enough in severing the British connection we shall be strong enough to resist any other power that may venture to attack us. From which country or countries need we fear attack? The countries of western Europe are too much involved in their mutual hates and jealousies to trouble us much. The United States of America are too far away for effective action. Japan has her hands full in China, and the latent hostility of America and the Western powers will not permit her to embark on any new adventure. China will have to face her own great difficulties for a long time to come, and in any event it is difficult to imagine that our relations with her will be anything but friendly. There remain the little state of Afghanistan and Russia. Afghanistan in the past has had the closest bonds with India and it will be our endeavour to revive them. Even if we do not succeed in doing so we have little to fear from her. The strength of her people lies in defence in their mountain fastnesses and not in a serious attack. Her people are brave fighters but their resources are very limited. It is not conceivable that they can succeed against us. It is quite possible, however, that they may carry out a number of successful raids before we can defeat them and hold them in check.

### VIII

Russia then remains the sole country that may threaten our freedom. She is powerful enough and in a favourable position to attack us. Should we fear such an attack? For generations the bogey of a Russian invasion has been held up to us — during the days of the Tsars we were told that it was Russian imperialism thrusting down to the sea, and now it is communism trying to subvert the world. So we are told by the British. How far does the traditional rivalry between England and Russia concern us, and why should we inherit the hate and fear of Russia from England? The Soviet Government ever since its formation ten years ago has had to contend against a host of external enemies and even greater misfortune and difficulty at home. These enmities and difficulties continue and are likely to remain and Russia can hardly be expected to embark on an aggressive campaign with so

many dangers to face at home and abroad. Her Government is wholly based on the industrial workers and the peasants, and the latter are gradually gaining greater power and influence. The peasantry are notoriously against war. They can be roused to defend their country when attacked, as they did against Denikin and Koltchak<sup>9</sup>, but no aggressive campaign can succeed with the dead weight of their disapproval. No country is perhaps more in need of peace than Russia and only fear of circumstances outside her control are likely to drive her to war. Nonetheless there is more talk of war in Russia today than in any other country. She suffers from a fear complex and the efforts of her many enemies to form combinations against her, haunt her and sometimes drive her to cruel excesses. She can have nothing to fear from a free India and there is no reason why she should imperil her existence by taking aggressive action against our country and thus permit her other enemies to attack her weakened flanks. We shall thus have little to fear from Russia when we are free. The danger from Russia is caused solely by the rivalry between England and Russia. It ceases as soon as the British connection is severed. Our position thus, in a military sense, is better and stronger as an independent country than it would be if we were within the fold of the British group of nations.

But although there is apparently no danger of attack or invasion from any country we cannot dismiss the possibility. Wars come unannounced and the best of neighbours fall out. We shall thus have to keep ourselves prepared and the best of preparation will be, not so much military material, but the spirit of our people. That spirit can only be roused if we put an end to all exploitation of our peasantry and workers. If they feel that the burdens that have borne down upon them for ages past and crushed them have at last been lifted, they will fight for their country and for their own freedom with the valour and doggedness that comes from a new hope. Let us remember how the ragged soldiers of the French Revolution, without food or guns, faced and vanquished the armies of Europe. Few of us can have forgotten the plight of Russia on the eve of her treaty with Germany ten years ago. The army had gone to pieces and there was chaos all over the land. Soon after they had to meet attacks from the East, the South and the West; they had to face a terrible famine and pestilence; they were the outcasts from the human family and all the world seemed to be against them. But they had one great asset, something well worth fighting for — a great ideal and their faith in it. And so they drove back their enemies, fought famine and disease, and with amazing

9. Leaders of the counter-revolutionary armies which sought after 1917 to destroy the Bolshevik regime.

courage and pertinacity set themselves to the task of reconstructing Russia. Like the men of the French Revolution they did much that was cruel and heartless. But we need not be communists, nor need we agree with their gospel of communism, in order to appreciate much that they have done.

In like manner will India defend herself successfully when the time of trial comes. But only if we have proceeded rightly and not compromised our principles for petty trifles; only if we have based our freedom on the freedom of the masses and raised the under-dog and made him a sharer in the good things that independence will bring to us. What Indian will suffer or fight with goodwill for a few more ministerships, or high posts, or provincial autonomy, or even the shackled liberty that the British Commonwealth can promise us?

We shall have to face risks and dangers. Why should we avoid them or be frightened of them when the only alternative is continual degradation and subjection to foreign domination? And if the risks and dangers are too great and overwhelm us, let us at any rate go down gallantly, having done our best, so that India may at least have a noble epitaph to end her millennia of chequered but magnificent history.

## IX

In developing our foreign policy we shall naturally first cultivate friendly relations with the countries of the East which have so much in common with us. Nepal will be our neighbour and friend; with China and Japan, Indonesia, Annam, and Central Asia we shall have the closest contact. So also with Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey and Egypt. Some people, living in a world of their own creation, imagine that there is a pan-Islamic block which may threaten India. This is pure fancy. Everyone of the Islamic countries is developing on intensely national lines and there is absolutely no room in them for an external policy based on religion. Indeed even their domestic policy has little to do with religious dogmas. The interests of these countries are and will continue to be our interests. With the European nations we are bound to develop further contacts. We have much to learn from them and closer intercourse will be to the advantage of both.

Russia offers a peculiar problem which requires special consideration. She has adopted an economic policy with the rigid faith of a new religion and she is continually trying to spread it to other countries. That policy even in Russia has undergone some change during the last few years and it is possible that it may further change. Whether a variant of that policy or some other form of socialism should be our aim is one of the problems which we have to solve. But even if we

are wholly opposed to that policy we can have friendly relations with Russia. Turkey is no lover of communism but in her external policy she is on the side of Russia. In considering this question one cardinal fact has to be kept in mind. The principles, and what is more important the practice, of Soviet Russia have always, with one exception, been in favour of the fullest self-determination of various peoples. She has always been for the oppressed and the exploited. The one exception to this general policy is her behaviour in Georgia<sup>10</sup> where it appears that she is holding on against the will of the Georgians. Her excuse is that there is oil there and if she left some other power will take possession of the country. The excuse is a feeble one and is of the kind advanced by any of the imperialist powers. It is possible that in the future as she grows in power, even Soviet Russia may develop a new type of imperialism. But there is little chance of that for a long time to come and for the present she is undoubtedly, and for reasons of self-interest, the friend of all the oppressed nationalities. India has thus every reason to develop friendly relations with Russia. In many ways conditions in Russia are not very dissimilar to Indian conditions, in education and agriculture and the beginnings of industry to mention some instances, and we could learn much from studying their methods.

## X

India will also have to keep watch on the many Indians who are abroad and lay down a policy for their guidance. They should be free to go where they like for purposes of labour or business but only to countries where they are welcome and are treated honourably. We cannot thrust them down in other lands and win for them a privileged position by force as the imperialist powers have so often done with their nationals. An Indian who goes to other countries must cooperate with the people of that country and win for himself a position by friendship and service. In Kenya, for example, there are many Indians, fellow-sufferers with the Africans under the domination of a few white settlers. The Indians should cooperate with the Africans and help them as far as possible and not claim a special position for themselves which is denied to the indigenous inhabitants of the country. To take another case, that of Burma. We all hope that in the future federation of India, Burma will be an honoured member. But it should be made perfectly clear that it is for the people of Burma to make the

10. The Soviet government suppressed a number of attempts in Georgia to declare independence.

decision, and should they decide on a separation from India, they are perfectly welcome to do so.

## XI

Many of these questions will only arise after we are free. We can hardly develop a foreign policy so long as we are dependent on a foreign government. We can do little now. But we can at least lay down the general lines of our future policy and try to keep in touch with movements in other countries. The League against Imperialism offers us one way of doing so of which we should take full advantage. But we should not limit ourselves to it. There are many other ways also of our developing these contacts and it would be desirable for the Congress to open a foreign department to do so.

There is one vital issue, however, which we must face immediately. What will India do in case of a war in which England is involved? Thirteen years ago we were swept in before we knew what had happened and out manpower and resources were fully utilised for the benefit of England. Are we going to allow ourselves to be similarly exploited again? The danger of war coming in the near future is serious enough. All nations of Europe are making frenzied preparations for it, while their representatives spend pleasant days in Geneva discussing disarmament.<sup>11</sup> Russia is continually discussing the coming war. The whole of English policy seems to be based on it. And when nations prepare for war and expect it, it has a way of coming even though no country wants it. If war comes the East is sure to be involved and England is consequently strengthening her position in the Pacific and in India. The Singapore base can be a challenge only to Japan and China. In India it is proposed to transfer the control of the army to the British War Office and to station a large part of the British expeditionary force within easy reach of the North-West Frontier. All this means a preparation for war with Russia. India has no quarrel with Russia; she has considerable sympathy for her, and there is much in her that she admires. Why then should we be dragged into a war against Russia for the benefit of British imperialism? But there is no doubt that we shall be dragged in if we patiently wait on and do nothing. The British dominions have established their right to join England in a war or not to do so as they choose, though it is difficult to imagine where the British Commonwealth will be if one part of it is at war and another at peace. India should also declare unequivocally that she will

11. A series of bilateral and multilateral disarmament conferences was held at Geneva under the aegis of the League of Nations between 1919 and 1939.

be no party to any war without her express consent, and if she is bullied or hustled into such a war, she will not help in any way. We must have this declaration made and repeatedly made and it should be made known to the people as widely as possible by press and platform. We have nothing to gain by being parties to such a conflict and we have a great deal to lose.

Montana, Switzerland

#### 44. Victory Over the Air<sup>1</sup>

About 18 years ago, when I was a student at Cambridge, I saw aeroplanes flying in Germany and France. Before that also I had heard that in America the Wright brothers<sup>2</sup> had demonstrated that they could fly in a machine heavier than air. Some used to fly two yards higher than the ground; now they can fly at an altitude of 200 to 300 yards. This was the first time when a man flew in the air in a heavy machine. Before this, people had flown in balloons by filling them with gas and making them lighter than air, but that was a different principle. After the Wright brothers, it was known that a Frenchman, Santos Dumont<sup>3</sup>, had also succeeded in flying in a similar machine.

After that news of quick progress started pouring in. Bleriot crossed the Channel and flew from France to England. Thereafter an aeroplane in the sky ceased to be much of a surprise.

About eighteen years ago, I was in Berlin. Count Zeppelin<sup>4</sup> was to arrive in his famous airship after a long flight. There was great publicity and a vast number of people had come to welcome him. We also went to the field where he was to land. There was a great rush, and

1. *Aaj*, 28 September 1927. Original in Hindi.
2. Orville Wright (1871-1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867-1912); on 17 December 1903 they made the first controlled, sustained flights in a power-driven airplane. Record-breaking flights in 1908 by Orville Wright in the United States and by Wilbur Wright in France brought them world-wide fame.
3. Alberto Santos-Dumont (1873-1932); Brazilian aeronaut resident in France from 1891 to 1928. A pioneer in the development of aircraft, he was the first to construct and fly in 1898 a gasoline-motored airship.
4. Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin (1838-1917); German army officer and designer and builder of the famous airships named after him.

some 15 to 20 lakhs of people had gathered there. The Kaiser<sup>5</sup> also, with all his officers, was there in great pomp. The airship came in at the correct time and it was greeted with great delight. All round, the German 'hoch', 'hoch' could be heard. I was trying to take some photographs with my small camera. They are still with me. The hotel in which we had stayed gave us that night a very nice photograph of Count Zeppelin. That too is with me still.

That was eighteen years ago. Since then man has mastered the air to a great extent and the aeroplanes have improved tremendously. Today thousands of passengers travel by air every day and from big cities aeroplanes carrying passengers fly every day. I also had two occasions to travel by air, once from London to Paris and then from London to Ostend.

But it was in Paris, only two months ago, that I realised how much progress had been made. Two Frenchmen, Chungressor and Coley, tried to fly direct to America from Paris. It was a very difficult and dangerous journey. All Paris was full of joy and of anxiety. A few hours after their departure, the news came that they had succeeded and reached America. There was rejoicing in every street in Paris. The big stores stopped working for sometime and everybody started congratulating everyone else. The house of the old mother of Chungressor was swamped with flowers. But the happiness was short-lived. It was realised that the news was false and that in fact the whereabouts of the two heroes were not known. Thereafter there was an incessant search but they could be found nowhere and it became certain that the two had found their grave in the Atlantic.

Paris was in mourning. After a few days the news came that a boy from New York was flying to Paris all alone. All were laughing at his foolishness. He was alone and had no means of communication or any special equipment in the plane. For thousands of miles, between sky and ocean, a slight defect in his aeroplane or any mistake of his own — and let alone seeking help, he would not have been even found. But this fool committed the folly of courage and straight as an arrow he came over Paris. The French did not much like this — an American success — where their own countrymen had failed and died. But the courage of Lindbergh<sup>6</sup> won the hearts of the people, and he was welcomed in Paris and in other cities of Europe in a way in which even

5. Wilhelm II (1859-1941); Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia. He failed in his endeavours to make Germany into a major naval, colonial and commercial power. The German defeat in 1918 resulted in his abdication.

6. Charles Augustus Lindbergh (b. 1902); American aviator; on 21 May 1927 landed in Paris after a solo, nonstop trans-Atlantic flight in *The Spirit of St. Louis* from New York.

kings have not been received. As for America — the whole continent went mad about him. Had Lindbergh lost his head, no one would have been surprised. Even old and experienced men become arrogant on such occasions, and he was just a boy. But a greater miracle than even flying the Atlantic was the self-control that he showed. He did not let this massive applause and excitement go to his head. He was offered crores of rupees, but he refused to accept any money.

From where did this wonderful boy learn that daring and that patience? Lindbergh is considered as a god in the United States today but very few people know that his father was considered to be a rebel in his own country. He was a senator who fought for freedom and justice in the teeth of opposition. Such people are not very much liked. When the United States went to war against Germany in the Great War, the senior Lindbergh opposed it and was widely criticised. He could not get a platform to speak from and he was called a revolutionary. Had he been living today, the very people who are hailing his son to the skies would have called the father a Bolshevik. When he died he was not buried in the normal way, but he was cremated and his son took his ashes up in an aeroplane and scattered them over his land. Knowing that Lindbergh is the son of that 'Bolshevik' one is not surprised at his courage.

After Lindbergh, the Atlantic has been crossed on two more occasions, and now attempts are still being made. Europe and America give much attention to flying. What about India? I do not know if our leaders pay any attention to this or whether our young men ever think of conquering the air in this manner and enhancing the prestige and power of our country. Our country is unfortunately in bondage and so neither our leaders nor our young can do much; but still something can be done if attention is paid to it. England is full of Indians who, allured by the Bar, medicine or jobs, stay there undergoing all sorts of humiliation in London and Edinburgh. If even a few of them would dare to learn flying and shun the idea of jobs, they could be of so much benefit to India. After all our country also is going to be free and I think that will be soon. Where, after independence, shall we get persons who can fly aeroplanes? It is obvious even to the superficial observer that this victory over the air in Europe and America will bring far-reaching results to the world, the foremost being the effect on the methods of warfare. It is now established that the old-fashioned armies and ships cannot stand up to aeroplanes and gas. Aeroplanes can annihilate a big army and can ruin several cities with a bomb. The work of the ordinary army will gradually become what the police are doing today and guns and cannons will be reduced to the level of *lathis*. Our leaders, who are striving to secure for Indians also commissions in

the army, should consider this a little. Otherwise our officers and army will be mere glittering dummies on parade and be worth nothing else.

Passenger aeroplanes are today most common in Germany. According to the Versailles treaty, Germany cannot maintain military aircraft. She is therefore concentrating on passenger planes. The biggest aeroplanes factories in Europe are in Germany. In one of these factories an Indian holds a high position. I was so pleased to see him, and my expectations rose that other countrymen of mine also will join this line. France too has progressed considerably in this matter. England is rather backward. Aeroplanes can fly well and flying can be developed more in a country which is large and has hundreds and thousands of miles of open country. For this reason, in the future, it may progress in America and Russia and perhaps in China too. There is also plenty of opportunity for flying in our country.

I hope the Hindustani Seva Dal will pay attention to this matter. They should try to understand how in different parts of the world the air is being conquered and some of the volunteers should try to understand how an aeroplane works and learn to fly it.

#### 45. To Raja Rau<sup>1</sup>

Paris  
26.10.27

My dear Raja Rau,

I have just received your draft for Swiss frs. 2530-20/100. I shall pay over £ 100 to the League against Imperialism and send you their formal receipt for it.

In future if you have to make any remittance to the continent do not do it through Cooks. They give a very bad rate of exchange. I do not know what you paid them in rupees but the equivalent of the money you have sent is considerably short of £ 102-12-3. According to the rates prevailing here this sum in English money should amount to about 2580 Swiss francs. Thus you have been defrauded of nearly 50

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, part II, 1927-28, p. 433-434. N.M.M.L.

francs which means nearly £ 2. Any big bank will give you a better rate. It is usually better to send a draft in English money and get it converted here.

I hope to sail with my wife, sister & Indira on Dec. 2nd. Father may come with us but it is not certain. We shall go by the Messageries Maritimes boat *Angers* which reaches Colombo on Dec. 19th. I hope to reach Madras in time for the Congress.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**46 To Syed Mahmud<sup>1</sup>**

My dear Mahmud,

Some time ago you wrote to me to thank me for not writing to you. As I have persisted in this honourable inactivity, so far as letter writing is concerned, I wonder why you have not repeated your thanks. As you have stated I am a headstrong and pig-headed person. For months past I have almost given up writing letters to India and somehow I cannot recapture the mood for correspondence. This is hardly a letter. It is meant to inform you that we intend sailing from Marseilles by the Messageries Maritimes boat *Angers* on Dec 2nd, reaching Colombo on Dec 19th. From Colombo we hope to go to Madras where we are all looking forward to meeting you and your wife. I am not sure yet if father will be able to come with us. Perhaps he may.

Love,

Yours affly,  
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.



MOSCOW 1927

## Soviet Russia

### I

Since my return from Europe I have frequently been asked about Russia. All manner of questions have been put to me and on the strength of a very brief visit to Russia Moscow I have been treated almost as an expert on Russia and all manner of questions have been put to me, most often to my great embarrassment. When asked to speak, specially at student gatherings, the subject always has almost invariably been Soviet Russia.

In spite of limited knowledge of the subject however I have gladly responded for I have welcomed the spirit of enquiry and the interest in a country which has many points of contact with us, and which has launched on one of the mightiest experiments in history. All the world is watching her, some with fear and hatred, and others with passionate hope and the longing to follow in her path.

It is difficult to feel indifferent towards Russia, and it is still more difficult to judge her achievements and her failures impartially. She is tilling too much of a live wire to be handled without a violent reaction, and those who write about her can seldom avoid superlatives of praise and/or denunciation. Something Much

47. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>Moscow  
10.11.27

Nan darling,

This is not going to be a letter. I have no time to write a real letter but still I want to send you a few lines from Moscow, if only for the sake of the stamp! To give an account of our impressions and experiences even within the 36 hours or so we have been here would take a long slice off a day and many sheets of notepaper. We are in topsy turvy land. All one's old values get upset and life wears a strange aspect here. Everybody is *tovarish* (comrade). We have to address the waiter or porter or cabby as *tovarish* and the president of the Soviet Republic has to do the same to the poorest peasant. It seems alright in theory but in practice it takes some getting used to.

Moscow is in some ways like any big city, and yet it is so different. The comparative poverty of the people is obvious. There are very few cars in evidence; private cars there are hardly any if at all. There are some taxis and then there are the cars belonging to the various departments of the State. Electric trams and motor buses run but most of the people seem to walk. The roads and pavements are crowded with pedestrians. The shops, though often containing beautiful Russian-made goods, are poor in comparison with shops elsewhere. But the spirit of equality is rampant, and pride in the revolution. We arrived a day too late and missed the great celebration. There was a grand parade of the army and a march-past of a million and a half people in front of Lenin's tomb. It must have been a sight worth seeing. Then there was an aeroplane display — the aeroplanes are referred to by everyone here as Russia's answer to Chamberlain.<sup>2</sup> During the big procession, I am told, there was an effigy of Chamberlain which was hissed at continuously.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Austen Chamberlain, British Foreign Secretary, announced in the summer of 1927 that trade and diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. had been severed.

Moscow is full of flags and bunting. The hammer and the sickle — the Soviet sign — is everywhere; and also the figures 1917 — 1927, representing the 10 years of the revolution. And of course Lenin's pictures. One cannot move or turn in any direction without gazing at Lenin — a statue or picture or photo or painting. Every house and almost every shop window has it. He is the God of the Russians today and a mere mention of his name makes them light up.

Talking of God — there is a beautiful chapel of the Virgin Mary<sup>3</sup> almost opposite our hotel nestling under the Kremlin<sup>4</sup>. Many people — chiefly women — visit it still. The Soviet people do not stop anyone from going there but on a wall opposite they have displayed prominently a quotation from Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people".

Our hotel is a queer mixture of the grand and the lowly. It is a big building with fine halls etc. but some of the arrangements are primitive. It used to be a fashionable hotel. Now, the building stands as it was and even the fine furniture is sometimes to be found but it is carefully covered up with white cloth. Finery is not encouraged. The effect of a few hours of Moscow on Kamala was that she wanted to take off the border from a simple *sari* she was wearing as she felt she was over-dressed.

I can't continue this letter now. So I am posting it as it is.

Your loving brother,  
Jawahar

3. Near the Kremlin are two famous cathedrals dedicated to the Virgin Mary — Cathedral of the Assumption and Cathedral of the Annunciation. They were built in the 15th and 16th centuries.
4. The citadel or walled city within Moscow, is the headquarters of the Soviet Government. It contains also the cathedral where the Tsars were crowned, an imperial palace, and the bell-tower of Ivan the Great.

48. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

In Poland  
en route to Berlin  
12.11.27

Nan dear,

We are in the train going across Poland. We ought to reach Berlin tomorrow morning but an unfortunate oversight is likely to give us a lot of trouble and we may have to stop at the frontier. We have no fresh German visas on our passports and it appears that these are necessary to enter Germany again. We gave our passports to some Russian friends and asked them to get the necessary visas. They got us the Polish transit & the Russian but apparently overlooked the German. The passports were returned to us just before we left and we had no time to look into them before our departure. This morning as we entered Polish territory we found out definitely that we must have German visas also. We wanted to send telegrams to Berlin & Moscow to have instructions sent to the frontier but none of the stations will accept them. The people and the organisation here are quite primitive and hardly anyone understands anything but Polish. Besides they say they cannot send any telegrams beyond Moscow. So we are in a quandary. We are going on to Warsaw and will try to get visas there in the evening but there is no chance of success as all offices will be closed. What makes matters worse is that it is Saturday today and Sunday tomorrow. Probably we shall go on to the frontier & get stranded there! This means the loss of one day at least which is a pity as we might have spent it in Moscow.

Our stay in Moscow was ridiculously short — just three days! We saw a great deal but naturally our impressions are of the vaguest kind and rather jumbled. A month's stay might have made us understand conditions there a little. What was obvious however was the extraordinary absence of different classes such as we find in other countries. There was very little to separate the President<sup>2</sup> of the Soviet Union

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. M. I. Kalinin (1875-1946); Russian revolutionary and a loyal follower of Stalin; was the first Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. 1923-46, and a member of the Politburo, 1925-46.

from the poorest peasant, and the latter is as ignorant and primitive as the Indian peasant. The President indeed was himself an ordinary worker and has only recently been induced to put on a tie! What a comparison between this and the pomp & pageantry of other countries. We visited the great opera house<sup>3</sup> — a magnificent building with seven tiers of gilded galleries. It was absolutely full. Indeed we were given some special seats which were put in the passages for the purpose. Instead of an evening dress show audience we saw ordinary working folk and peasants in every variety of attire — mostly without ties, many in their shirt sleeves without coats even; Tartars in their native costumes, long coats with enormous headgear, Mongols etc. No powder and puff elegance, only the relaxation of tired working people. The show was exceedingly good. There were a number of separate tunes, songs, dances, ballets and some of them were the best I have seen.

We had no time to see other theatres or shows although tickets were waiting for us. We went to a cinema though and saw one of the numerous films of the revolution. It was very good.

Then we saw the central peasants' house in Moscow, with museums, reading rooms, lecture rooms and bedrooms for nearly 400. Every manner of agricultural implement of the latest variety was exhibited; a large electrical room showed the application of electricity to agriculture and domestic use. Free advice on legal matters and agricultural questions was given and daily lectures organised. We saw large numbers of peasants feeding in the dining room.

We were told that there were 350 such peasants' houses in North Russia alone now and scores of others in Ukraine, Georgia and Siberia etc.

The electrification of the country is proceeding very rapidly and already there are dozens of very big power stations scattered all over.

The industrial workers are of course far better organised than the peasants. They have their trade union halls everywhere where frequent lectures are given, fine reading rooms etc. Most of the old palaces of the nobility are now converted into workers' clubs or peasants' houses. There can be no doubt that the conditions of the peasantry and the workers in Russia, in spite of the general poverty and low wages, are far superior to those elsewhere. What is more, their whole moral stature has improved and they look forward with hope and confidence to the future.

We also visited a prison — the biggest in Moscow — meant for the serious cases. There were four hundred prisoners. The prison officials

3. The Bolshoi Theatre.

numbered 52 in all from the head to the lowest warder. There were no convict warders. Owing to the application of the 8 hour day the 52 officials worked in three shifts so that at one time there were only about 17 warders etc. None of those, except one or two at the gate, were armed. Indeed these few warders were not much in evidence. The whole jail was more like a factory inside where textile machinery was working away. The convicts were given wages for the work they did — 2/3rd of these wages were kept in reserve for them till the time of their release so that they might have some money to start life afresh. They were allowed to spend 1/3rd of their wages by making any purchases they liked — books, food, cigarettes etc. We saw in two of the cells we visited radio sets fitted which the convict had paid for out of his wages. No special dress is worn by the convicts, nor, we were told, are fetters or handcuffs ever used inside or outside the jail. Prisoners are not given numbers but are referred to by name. The maximum sentence of any prisoner in the jail was ten years, liable to reduction if good work is done. In the short time at our disposal it was not possible to go into the system thoroughly and probably only the rosy side was shown to us. Nonetheless what we saw created a very favourable impression. The jail was treated not as a place of punishment but as a place of detention. Indeed even the name has been changed. It is called a prison no longer but a place for isolation and improvement by work. There was a barber's shop in the jail run by a prisoner and we saw him shave another convict in proper style finishing up by an *eau de cologne* spray. Payment was made for this out of the wages earned by work. Prisoners are not allowed to keep money; they pay by chits etc. and the account is kept in the jail office.

In the jail yard we saw a crowd of prisoners having their midday exercise. No warders were in evidence and there was nothing special to indicate that these people were convicts. In one corner there were arrangements to play basket ball.

Two of the men we saw were political convicts. One had been sentenced for espionage. He was from Czechoslovakia and being a good musician he had been made music director of the jail. The other was a Russian. He was an aviator in the Red army and he had deserted with his plane and gone over to the White Russians when the latter were attacking the Soviets. He was sentenced to death, but later this was commuted to 10 years. He was employed as an electrician in the jail.

We were invited to a banquet one night by an association of servants. We were asked to go at 10 p.m. The home of this association was a beautiful villa of a rich merchant who had fled from Russia. There were fine halls & paintings. Dinner started at 11.30 p.m. Soon after the caviar speeches began and these went on in various languages right

through the feast — the languages being Russian, French, German, Spanish, English, Esperanto, Czech & perhaps some others. At 1.15 a.m. the dinner was gradually concluding but the speeches were going strong, and we left.

We paid an interesting visit to the Commissariat of Education and were told how the problem of illiteracy was being successfully tackled, even among the grown-ups. We were shown all manner of primers etc. in the numerous languages of Siberia & Turkestan etc.

Then there were meetings and a great Congress of the Friends of Russia held in a magnificent hall — where in the old days the 'Tzar used to hold his *durbars* or do some such thing.

We saw the Kremlin — also the Mausoleum of Lenin where Lenin's body is kept embalmed for all to see. He lies with his great forehead calm and peaceful, satisfied, as it were, with the work he had done. He died young, in the early fifties. A ceaseless stream of people passes by to look at him and do him reverence.

Among those we met were Lenin's widow<sup>4</sup>, who is now an assistant Commissar in the department of education, Kalinin, the president of the Union, Chicherin<sup>5</sup>, Bukharin<sup>6</sup> and several others whose names you are not likely to know. But one person who fascinated me was Madame Sun Yat Sen.

She is delightful, looks twenty five and is full of life and energy. She was six years in an American University and speaks English with an American accent, but not unpleasantly.

Impressions crowd on me but I cannot go on. The picture I carry away from Russia is one of admiration for the men who have accomplished so much within a few years in spite of all the disadvantages that one can imagine. We are always complaining of the poor human material we have in India; yet in Russia it is or was no better.

4. N. K. Krupskaya (1869-1939); Lenin's wife and collaborator.

5. Georgi Vasilyevich Chicherin. (1872-1936), Russian statesman, who joined the Social Democratic Party in 1904; was arrested during the October Revolution of 1917; returned to Russia in January 1918 as Trotsky's aide and soon succeeded him as foreign commissar. He successfully prepared for the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Great Powers, notably by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922.

6. N. I. Bukharin, (1888-1938); Russian Communist leader and theoretician; took part in the October Revolution (1917) and became a leading figure in the Comintern and editor of *Pravda*. In 1924 he was made a full member of the Politburo. At first an ally of Stalin, he later differed from his policy. In 1929 he lost his major posts. In 1938 he was tried publicly for treason and was executed.

## Enough of Russia.

I think I wrote to you some weeks ago that we shall require *khadi* clothing when we land in Colombo and later in Madras. So far as Madras is concerned you could send some clothes & beddings for us with any of the delegates who might be going there. Beddings are not required in Colombo. Please send them to Madras and do not send *lihaf* & *gaddas* & other bulky articles. As for clothe I want in Colombo : 2 pairs of *pyjamas*. 2 *kurtas*, 2 *dhotis* and 2 white caps — no more. I have some things with me also. These and such things as may be required in Colombo by Kamala, Betty & Indu should be sent C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Grand Oriental Hotel Buildings, Colombo.

Our Madras address will be C/o the Reception Committee, Indian National Congress.

We are approaching Warsaw now. It has been snowing all day. Moscow was quite warm & pleasant for the time of the year but father had previously come to the conclusion that Moscow was a very cold place and he was all the time on the defensive against a cold which did not exist.

Please do not forget to inform the Congress people in Allahabad or Benares wherever the office of the U.P.P.C.C. is to elect all of us as delegates to the Madras Congress. Any fees that may be necessary should be paid. Write to Shiva Prasad Gupta about it.

Love,

Your loving brother,  
Jawahar

You will find all the clothes I require in the things I have sent back.

49. To Rangaswamy Iyengar<sup>1</sup>

Montreux  
16.11.27

My dear Rangaswami,

As we have been travelling about incessantly I have not yet been able to get the receipt for the £ 100 I paid to the League against Imperialism.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p. 431-432. N.M.M.L.

We have received no letters for 2 weeks. Our short visit to Russia and constant travelling made it impossible for letters to follow us. I hope however to get the receipt soon and to send it to you. Meanwhile I enclose a letter I received from the Secretary, League against Imperialism sometime ago. According to his request I paid this money to Edo Fimmen.

As I wrote to you we hope to sail from Marseilles by the Messageries Maritimes Steamer *Angers* on Dec. 2nd. This is done to reach Colombo on December 19th. After a day or two in Colombo we shall proceed to Madras. It is not certain yet if father will be able to come. Much depends on his cases in the Privy Council. Anyway my wife, sister, daughter and I will sail on December 2nd.

I shall be obliged if you will make some arrangements for our stay in the Congress camp. I shall wire to you from Colombo our time of arrival in Madras.

Our visit to Russia was very short but nonetheless exceedingly interesting.

Yours very sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

She is delightful, looks twenty five and is full of life and energy. She was six years in an American University and speaks English with an American accent but not unpleasantly.

enfaw[ons crowd on me but I cannot go on. The picture I carry away from Russia is one of admiration for the men who have triumphed so hand down and I regret that I leave it to you to tell you of all the disadvantages that one can imagine. We are always complaining of the poor human material we have in India, yet in Russia it is or was no better.

Т. Раджаварм Чандра

4. N. K. Krupskaya (1869-1971); Lenin's wife and collaborator.
5. Georgi Vassilievich Chicherin (1872-1936). Russian statesman, who joined the Social-Democratic Party in 1904; was arrested during the October Revolution, 1917, and released in January 1918 as Trotsky's aide and soon appointed him as foreign commissar. He successfully prepared for the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Great Powers, notably by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918.
6. of sids need to be saved. I (Vladimir Ilyich) had planned to be a socialist teacher brought out of bisq. I. 001. 2. adi not longer adi be the Comintern and editor of *Pravda*. In 1924 he was made a full member of the Politburo. At first in ally of Stalin, he later differed from him. In 1929 he fell ill. In 1936 he was arrested.

## SOVIET RUSSIA

These articles were contributed to various newspapers in India. Most of them appeared in the *Hindu* of Madras, the one on 'Education' appeared in *Young India*, and some have appeared in other papers. I am having them issued in book form with considerable hesitation. I realize, more perhaps than the average reader, their deficiencies and how digested and sketchy they are. Some of them, may I confess it, were written in railway trains, and all have been sandwiched into the intervals between other activities which absorbed most of my time. I am also fully aware that it requires a person of considerable knowledge and some courage to write about the complex and ever changing conditions of Soviet Russia. I claim no such knowledge and though I may possess the habit of rushing in where wiser people fear to tread, I do not claim to lay down the law about Russia or to dogmatise about anything that has happened there. I have found the study of Soviet conditions an absorbing one, and from the numerous enquiries that I have received, it is clear that many others hunger for information about them. This patchwork seems of articles with many omissions and repetitions, based on a little personal knowledge and more on the reading of books, will hardly satisfy that hunger. But perhaps it may answer a few questions and point to those who wish to pursue the subject further, the path of fuller knowledge. Hence my timidity in offering this little book to the public.

Woodrow Wilson in his address to the Congress on December 17th, 1917 said: "You catch with me the voices of humanity that are in the air. They grow daily more audible, more articulate, more comprehensive, and they come from the hearts of men everywhere". To the student of modern Russia it is these voices of humanity that come, the cry of the undistinguished masses, ever louder and more insistent, and it seems to him that echoes answer from every country. A war weary world heard these voices in 1917. President Wilson heard them. Outlining his famous Fourteen Points (but, where are they now?) he referred to the peace parleys between Soviet Russia and Germany, and said: "The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen, should be held with open, not closed, doors. And all the world has been audience,

1. First published by Lalji Rao Molan Lal, University Road, Allahabad, in December 1928.



## Foreword

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1. First published by Lala Ram Mohan Lal, University Road, Allahabad, in December 1928.

as they desired.... There is, moreover, a voice calling for the definitions of principle and of purpose, which is, it seems to me more thrilling and more compelling than any of the more moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people.... They call to us to say what it is we desire, in what if in anything our purpose and spirit differed from theirs; and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond with utter sincerity and frankness. Whether their present leaders believe it or not it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace". And the sixth of the Fourteen Points was to be the acid test for the powers.

"The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unembarrassed and unhampered opportunity for the independent determination of her own political and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing, and, more than a welcome, assistance of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good-will, of their appreciation of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy".

These were generous words. But even the author and his own country failed to live up to them. And history shows us the result of this acid test and how the "sister nations" have, instead of giving sympathy and good-will, ceaselessly sought to hamper and destroy the new Russia. Today, ten years after the war, how far we are from an open diplomacy can be seen from the recent secret Anglo-French Naval Pact. But Russia has survived because she had the "voices of humanity" with her.

I am grateful to the editors of the various periodicals in which these articles have appeared for their courteous permission to print them. I am specially grateful to the editors of the *Hindu* and *Young India*. At the insistence of my friend, the publisher, some illustrations of his choosing have been included.<sup>2</sup> They bear little relation to the text, but they may perhaps be appreciated by some of those who are venturesome enough to possess themselves of a copy of this book.

ALLAHABAD

October 10, 1928

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Not included here.

## 1. The Fascination of Russia<sup>1</sup>

Since my return from Europe I have frequently been asked about Russia. On the strength of a very brief visit to Moscow I have been treated almost as an expert on Russia and all manner of questions have been put to me, often to my great embarrassment. When asked to speak, specially at student gatherings, the subject suggested has almost invariably been Soviet Russia. In spite, however, of limited knowledge of the subject, I have gladly responded, for I have welcomed this spirit of enquiry and this interest in a country which has many points of contact with ours, and which has launched on one of the mightiest experiments in history. All the world is watching her, some with fear and hatred, and others with passionate hope and the longing to follow in her path.

It is difficult to feel indifferent towards Russia, and it is still more difficult to judge of her achievements and her failures impartially. She is today too much of a live wire to be touched without a violent reaction, and those who write about her can seldom avoid superlatives of praise or denunciation. Much depends on the angle of vision and the philosophy of life of the observer; much also on the prejudices and pre-conceived notions which he brings to his task. But whichever view may be right no one can deny the fascination of this strange Eurasian country of the hammer and sickle, where workers and peasants sit on the thrones of the mighty and upset the best-laid schemes of mice and men.

For us in India the fascination is even greater, and even our self-interest compels us to understand the vast forces which have upset the old order of things and brought a new world into existence, where values have changed utterly and old standards have given place to new. We are a conservative people, not over-fond of change, always trying to forget our present misery and degradation in vague fancies of our glorious past and an immortal civilisation. But the past is dead and gone and our immortal civilisation does not help us greatly in solving the problems of today. If we desire to find a solution for these problems we shall

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 3 April 1928.

have to venture forth along new avenues of thought and search for new methods. The world changes and the truths of yesterday and the day before may be singularly inapplicable today. We have to follow the line of life in its ever-varying curves and an attempt to adhere rigidly to an outworn creed may take us off at a tangent from this curve of life and lead us to disaster.

Russia thus interests us because it may help us to find some solution for the great problems which face the world today. It interests us specially because conditions there have not been, and are not even now, very dissimilar to conditions in India. Both are vast agricultural countries with only the beginnings of industrialisation, and both have to face poverty and illiteracy. If Russia finds a satisfactory solution for these, our work in India is made easier.

Russia again cannot be ignored by us, because she is our neighbour, a powerful neighbour, which may be friendly to us and co-operate with us, or may be a thorn in our side. In either event we have to know her and understand her and shape our policy accordingly. The bogey of war with Russia is ever with us. In the days of the Tsar we were told that Russian imperialism wanted an outlet to the sea; now that the Tsar has gone we are warned against the insidious attempts of communists to subvert a peaceful and well-ordered world. The old political rivalry between England and Russia continues, whoever may occupy the seats of power in Whitehall or in Moscow or Petrograd.<sup>2</sup> How far must India inherit this rivalry or be made to suffer from it? There are rumours and alarms of war and the problem is an urgent one for us.

It is right therefore that India should be eager to learn more about Russia. So far her information has been largely derived from subsidised news agencies inimical to Russia and the most fantastic stories about her have been circulated. The question most frequently asked me has been about the alleged nationalisation of women! The most prolific suppliers of news about Russia have been the Riga correspondents of British and other newspapers. A writer in the *New York Nation* described recently how Riga correspondents are made.

He wrote as follows:

"The first time I served as a Riga correspondent was in London. An Editor made a correspondent of me by giving me an editorial leader clipped from one of the morning papers. He instructed me to re-cast part of it in the form of a dispatch and date it from Riga. The editorial

2. Famous city in Russia; situated at the mouth of the river Neva. Founded by Peter the Great as St. Petersburg, it is now known as Leningrad.

was one reviewing in some detail the pernicious activities of the Third International. I must have re-written it rather well, for later I was entrusted with other tasks of the same delicate nature. I became the paper's regular Riga correspondent — "from our own correspondent", as they like to say in Fleet Street.

"A year later I was in Paris and attached to a newspaper there. And in Paris I found myself again a Riga correspondent. The work was twofold now. There were French journals and English journals to rewrite. All of them, including the one in London which formerly employed me, seemed to boast Riga correspondents. In all their dispatches there were revelations — Bolshevik atrocities<sup>3</sup>, Cheka<sup>4</sup> executions, Soviet economic difficulties<sup>5</sup>, dissatisfaction of the people with the Government. As in London, this material was turned over to me; and out of the mass another composite Riga correspondent was born.

"Whenever I think of Riga now I do not visualize a city, but a newspaper office — old desks, paste-pots, shears, typewriters, waste paper. Riga is a newspaper office city. It may have a geographic location. For all I know it may be populated with individuals absorbed in their own affairs; eating well, sleeping well, dreaming of owning automobiles. You cannot prove it by me. Once, in a moment of inexcusable curiosity, I went to the trouble of hunting up Riga in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. That fount of current information describes it as a thriving port on the Baltic Sea, from which agricultural products, chiefly oats, are exported to England. Obviously, it was an old edition of the *Encyclopaedia*. By this time the rumours far outnumber the oats.

"If cities ever receive decorations for signal service, the Western world should confer prime honours upon Riga. By its mere existence as a four-letter word used for a dispatch date-line it has served as a barrier against the plots of the Soviets, thus keeping sacred and inviolate the idealism of Western Europe. Riga defends the world against the insidious propaganda of the Soviets. Red lies break against its intrepid front."

3. Bolshevism was threatened by foreign intervention, prolonged civil war and frequent risings and plots. So the Bolsheviks adopted ruthless measures to root out opposition.
4. The secret police set up by the Bolsheviks after the Revolution of 1917.
5. The Bolsheviks won the civil war but during those three years the economy collapsed, foreign trade virtually ceased as a result of the Allied blockade, and there was widespread famine.

## 2. The Journey<sup>1</sup>

We had been invited by the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to visit Moscow during the tenth anniversary<sup>2</sup> celebration early in November, 1927. A very large number of invitations had been issued to men and women in all countries — not only to communists but to many professors, scientists and distinguished individuals. I believe between seven and eight hundred persons responded to these invitations. Our own visit was decided upon at the last moment as we had little time to spare and the journey to Moscow was a long one.

We went from Berlin and crossed the whole of Poland. It was an uneventful and dreary journey. Poland looked a desolate and dismal country. Except for Warsaw, the stations were small wayside buildings with very few houses in the neighbourhood. Our German conductor in the train had the supremest contempt for Poland and all things Polish. For him civilisation ended at the German frontier and the Poles were a barbarous people. It may be however that the cheerless aspect of the country was due to the season; it was the beginning of winter. But even winter could not have made much difference to an industrial country, and from what we could see from the train there were few evidences of industrialism.

We reached the Russian frontier at Niegeroloje on the night of November 7, 28 hours after leaving Berlin. Just before our arrival we were visited in our compartment by a Russian officer in charge of the customs. He asked us if we were going to the celebrations as guests, and assuring himself of this, he told us not to worry about our luggage as he would take charge of it. We were excused the customs examination.

The frontier station was all beflagged and decorated. There were red flags everywhere, and the Soviet emblem — the hammer and the sickle. There were also pictures and busts of Lenin and other leaders. It was

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 7 April 1928.

2. The events which led to the Russian Revolution and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks occurred on 7 November (25 October by the old Calendar) 1917.

the anniversary day, just ten years after the Bolsheviks seized power, and all Russia was celebrating it.

We had already taken our dinner but the station staff produced large quantities of food and, after the Indian fashion, would have no refusal. We had to comply with their wishes. We had some difficulty in communicating with each other as the only European languages we could express ourselves in were English and French. The station staff knew no English whatever and exceedingly little French. Several knew German well. Ultimately a person was produced who could speak a little French and he became our interpreter. We had quite a little function; a speech of welcome was made to which I had to respond briefly. About a score of villagers were present — men, women and children — and they took great interest in the proceedings. Partly this may have been due to the *saris* of my wife and sister. We were then taken round the room and the pictures and posters were explained to us and we had our first experience of Lenin worship. Every mention of Lenin brought a rapt expression on the faces of those present. Our whole stay at this little wayside station resembled nothing so much, as my father remarked at the time, as a visit of a Congress deputation to a small town or village during the noncooperation days.

From Niegerolje we travelled in the Russian train. Our berths had been reserved by our hosts and we had a very comfortable journey. There is only one class in Russia but they have some special sleeping cars and we had been provided with these. We travelled the whole night and the greater part of the next day, arriving at Moscow the next afternoon. All the stations *en route* were decorated with flags and pictures in honour of the anniversary. The men and women and children we saw at the stations were well clad and most of them had great coats reaching to their ankles and big Russian boots up to the knees.

At Moscow we found representatives of the Cultural Society to greet us as well as a number of Indian young men whom we did not know. Mr. S. J. Saklatvala, who had preceded us by a few days, was also there. We were taken to the Grand Hotel de Moscow in the Place de la Revolution, a large building with many evidences of former grandeur and luxury. But evidently these signs of grandeur did not fit in with the present regime and were mostly covered up.

Our first feeling was of great regret that we had not come a day or two earlier. The real anniversary celebration had taken place the day before and we had missed it. This consisted of a march past the Lenin mausoleum of over a million troops and workers and children drawn from every part of Russia. Kalinin, the peasant President of the Russian Union, and still a peasant in his appearance in spite of his high office,

had taken the march past. From early morning till night had fallen the march past continued to the strains of the Internationale<sup>3</sup>, the workers' anthem; first the troops of all kinds and then representatives from factories and colleges and schools, and towns and villages. Workers and peasants, men and women and children, forty deep, went by, with banners flying, heads high and full of enthusiasm. Effigies there were of Chamberlain and Briand<sup>4</sup> and Baldwin<sup>5</sup>, some of them very clever. One of these showed Chamberlain wedged in a sickle with the hammer falling on his head. Finally, long after night had fallen, the Cossack cavalry made a magnificent charge at break-neck speed right across the great Red Square<sup>6</sup>. Such were the accounts that we heard, and the more we heard them the more we regretted having missed this magnificent spectacle.

3. A revolutionary hymn composed by Eugene Pottier in 1871.
4. Aristide Briand (1862-1932); French statesman. Between 1909 and 1929 he headed about a dozen governments. As wartime Prime Minister (October 1915-March 1917), he lacked vigour, but as foreign minister from 1925 to 1932 he was the chief architect of the Locarno Pact (1925) and the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928). He was a prominent figure in the League of Nations. He shared the 1926 Nobel Peace Prize with Gustav Stresemann.
5. Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947); Conservative politician and Prime Minister 1923-24, 1924-29 and 1935-37.
6. The Red Square, beside the Kremlin.

### 3. Impressions of Moscow<sup>1</sup>

The streets were full of people, mostly on foot. There were crowds everywhere, overflowing from the pavements to the middle of the streets, but they were orderly crowds obeying the law of the road and passing on ceaselessly without any jams or hold-ups. The police, or rather the militiamen, as they are called, seemed to control the traffic well. Their task was not so difficult as it is in other great cities, as the vehicular traffic was not great. There were many electric trams and motor buses, all crowded, and taxis and private cars, but altogether they made a poor show as compared with the vast numbers to be seen in Paris or Berlin

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 4 July 1928.

or London. Probably the crowds were greater than usual owing to the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Republic.

The city was beflagged and decorated for these celebrations. There was the red flag everywhere and the sign of the hammer and sickle, the symbol of the rule of the labourer and the peasant. Lenin's picture was often displayed, and the figure X representing the ten years of the republic was also frequently seen. At night there were illuminations showing off these decorations and signs, and even the electric bulbs were usually red. The colour red is dear to the Russian — even apart from its revolutionary significance. The Russian word for it means both red and beautiful, and the famous Red Square in Moscow, skirting the Kremlin, with Lenin's mausoleum on one side of it, was so called even before the revolution.

The first impression of Moscow is almost that of any great city, and yet as one proceeds differences are noticed, and one arrives at the conclusion that Moscow stands apart from the cities of the West. It is beautiful with its innumerable golden domes and wide squares and broad streets. It is full of churches — some one told us that there used to be 1,600 of them. Some of the bigger ones have been converted into museums but most of them are still open to the faithful. The Soviet Government does not encourage in any way church-going or religion. Indeed there are organisations which carry on a vigorous anti-religious propaganda, and education is wholly secular. But there are no restrictions in the way of people going to churches, and large numbers, specially from the countryside, still visit them. Right near the Kremlin is an ancient chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and its reputed holiness attracts people from far. We saw crowds, chiefly women, going in. There is no one to stop them, but none who pass that way can fail to see an inscription on an adjoining wall. In large letters, which stand out, is given a famous saying of Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people".

No city in the West perhaps offers such a variety of costume and head-gear as Moscow. Paris is supposed to be the greatest international centre of Europe. One comes across people from all countries there, but they are all in the standard costume of the West, almost the sole exception being Indian women, who continue to wear their *saris*. But in Moscow Asia peeps out from every corner, not tropical Asia but the Asia of the wide steppes and the cold regions of the North and East and centre. It has heavy boots on and every variety of long coat and hat. People have grown accustomed to these varieties and eccentricities of attire and pay little attention to them. Even the *saris* of my wife and sister, unusual as they were in Moscow, attracted less attention there than in Berlin or Paris.

But the real change one notices in Moscow, and which grows on one with every day's stay, is in the atmosphere and the very air of the place. The contrasts between extreme luxury and poverty are not visible, nor does one notice the hierarchy of class or caste. Everyone, whether he is a porter at the railway station or a waiter in a restaurant, is a *tovarish* — comrade — and is addressed as such. Merit or status is not judged by wealth or by the largeness of the salary. We were told that the highest salary paid to the members of the communist party — and all the high officials belong to this party — is 225 roubles a month, equivalent to about Rs. 300. The President of the Russian Union gets this salary and probably his clerk gets something not much less, the only difference being that the President will have some rooms to live in, a motor car for his use, and some other facilities. The peasant from the village or the labourer from the factory visiting the President will meet him as if he was one of his own class, only cleverer and more capable, and will address him as *tovarish*.

Most of the motor cars to be seen were either taxis or cars belonging to the State or to organisations — soviets, trade unions, co-operatives, factories, big firms, etc. Private cars, belonging to individuals, were not in evidence at all.

There were big shops and stores, outwardly resembling the shops of other cities. The big shops were all the property of the State, only the smaller ones belonging to individuals. There were also street hawkers trading in petty articles. Generally the goods displayed in the shops were simple and modest and had no pretensions to fashion or smartness. There were none of the dainties of the Rue de Rivoli or of Bond Street<sup>2</sup>. People in the streets and indeed everywhere were clad regardless of fashion, many without collars or ties. Many of them of course could not afford to buy anything expensive. But apart from the question of expense it was considered a bourgeois failing to waste time and money on clothes.

Some of the big squares had loud speakers which gave the news of the day and concerts and probably political speeches from time to time to convert the waverers and those in doubt. The communist does not miss a chance to give his gospel to the world.

We visited the State Opera House. It is a magnificent building, built in the Tsar's time, with seven golden tiers one over the other. In the days of the Tsar it was the meeting place of wealth and fashion. The audience we saw was very different. The house was full to overflowing with people in their work-a-day attire, sometimes without coats and in

2. A street in the West End in London, well-known for its fashionable shops.

their shirt sleeves. There was no attempt at smartness or dressing up for the occasion. There were all homely looking folk — intellectuals and workers and peasants, with a fair sprinkling of children. The performance, which consisted of dancing and singing and ballets, was exceedingly good and was thoroughly appreciated by the audience, which insisted on encores. A little boy and girl, not more than ten years of age, danced delightfully. The principal item however was the dance of a star performer of Tsarist days, now a woman of 60 but looking hardly 30. She danced amazingly well. Altogether, from the point of view of beauty and art, it was a show difficult to beat anywhere in the world.

We also visited a cinema show and saw a revolutionary film called *The Last Days of Petrograd*. The Russians are famous for the beauty and artistic excellence of their films, but unhappily we in India have no opportunities of seeing them. We have a surfeit of the gorgeous but stupid and inane productions of Hollywood in America. The film we saw showed the contrast between luxury and misery in the days of the Tsar, and then the ghastly scenes of the war. The downfall of the Tsar<sup>3</sup>, the Kerensky government<sup>4</sup>, and the fight for power between the Bolsheviks and Kerensky<sup>5</sup>, ending with Lenin's victory<sup>6</sup>, were shown very effectively. It was a very powerful and stirring film and its propaganda value must be immense.

We visited the museum of the Revolution housed in a building which was the 'English Club' house in olden days — meaning thereby that it was an English type of club and not a club confined to Englishmen. There were many interesting things in the museum but on the whole we were rather disappointed with it. We saw also an art gallery and were specially interested in finding pictures in it from Asiatic Russia-Turkistan, etc.

3. Due to inflation, food shortages and poor morale among the Russian troops a revolution broke out in Russia on 12 March 1917, as a result of which Tsar Nicholas II abdicated.
4. The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, led to the setting up of the Provisional Government under Prince Lvov, but his policy of continuing the war effort was opposed by the soviets of workers and sailors. The Provisional Government was reorganised in May but was replaced in July 1917 by a new one, headed by Kerensky.
5. A. F. Kerensky; Russian politician, a representative of the moderate Labour party in the fourth Duma, he joined the Socialist Revolutionary party after the February Revolution of 1917; became Minister of Justice, then War Minister and finally Prime Minister (July 1917) in the Provisional Government. He was swept out of office by the Bolsheviks in November 1917, fled to Paris and later migrated to the United States.
6. Kerensky failed to curb the growing power of the Bolsheviks. On 7 November 1917 the latter overthrew Kerensky's weak regime and established a Soviet government headed by the Council of Peoples' Commissars.

The magnificent Nobles' Hall of Tsarist days has now been converted into the Trade Union Hall. The 'Congress of the Friends of Russia' was held in this hall. It is one of the finest halls I have seen.

The Kremlin with its stately buildings and domes was of course visited by us. We did not go inside the Tsar's old palace or any other building except to pay a short visit to Kalinin, the President of the Union. He lived in two or three rooms, simply furnished, with no evidence of luxury or grandeur.

The revolution has changed many things in Russia but it has not changed the *drosky*. This is a primitive conveyance, a kind of four-wheeled rickshaw, drawn by a horse. Why anyone should use this ancient method of locomotion it was difficult to imagine. There was room for only one person in it or at most two thin persons, and the speed it went rarely exceeded six miles per hour.

The revolution has also not succeeded so far in putting down begging in the streets. We were often accosted by beggars, sometimes by young women with babes in their arms. The communists told us that this was much less than it used to be but it was difficult to wean the beggars from their age-long habit of begging.

Our stay in Moscow was too short for us to see much. But, short as it was, it was enough to make us feel the fascination of this beautiful city. We came away with regret and with the desire to see again its golden domes shining in the sun, and its streets and squares full of strange peoples from East and the West.

#### 4. The Soviet System<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet system has become so much identified with Bolshevism and Russia that it is difficult to think of it apart from them. Yet it is conceivable that it may exist, or rather that its outward structure may exist, without communism. One of the fugitive ex-grand dukes of Russia, who considers himself the rightful Tsar of Russia and who still clings to a lingering hope that he might one day instal himself in the Kremlin, stated some time ago that he approved of it and would continue it minus of course the communism. But for all practical purposes we might consider it as synonymous with the present regime in Russia.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 19 May 1928.

The Soviet idea was probably first outlined in 1834, by James Smith<sup>2</sup>, one of the leaders of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union<sup>3</sup>, started by Robert Owen<sup>4</sup> in England. In 1847 was issued the famous Communist Manifesto<sup>5</sup> of Marx and Engels<sup>6</sup>, which is considered to be the parent of present day communism. Nearly a generation later, in 1871, Paris had its brief and tragic spell of the Commune<sup>7</sup>. Louis Auguste Blanqui<sup>8</sup>, the father of the Commune, clearly advocated a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat during a revolutionary period. Blanqui himself was put in prison the day before the Commune was declared in Paris, and largely owing to his enforced absence and the lack of efficient leadership, the Commune fell, drowned in the blood of thirty thousand Parisians, who were mercilessly slaughtered by Thiers<sup>9</sup> and his generals. Today only the memory of it remains, but it is a living and a vivid memory. And the wall in the Pere Lachaise<sup>10</sup> cemetery in Paris — *le mur des Jeûneurs* — where the communards who had been taken prisoners were mowed down by machine guns, has become a place of pilgrimage for the communists and socialists of the world.

2. (1801-1857); edited various socialist journals; commonly known as Shepherd Smith from his journal *The Shepherd*; editor of *The Family Herald*, 1843-1857.
3. The leaders of the Trade Union movement in England were eager to bring all the working men in the country into a single union so that an effective general strike might be organised. In 1834 their efforts culminated in the formation of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union under the presidency of Robert Owen. The experiment, however, failed.
4. (1771-1858); British Utopian socialist, tried to implement his theories by establishing socialist colonies in Lancashire, Hampshire and America.
5. Drafted by Marx and Engels and first published in German in London in February 1848, remains the basic document of international Communism.
6. Friedrich Engels (1820-1895); socialist writer and lifelong friend of Karl Marx, with whom he collaborated in writing many important works on socialism.
7. After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, the new French regime accepted the peace terms, which included the entry of German troops into Paris. This was bitterly resented and led to riots and the setting up of a central committee (26 March 1871), calling itself the Commune, in emulation of the Jacobin-dominated Assembly of 1793. It was suppressed by the Government after six weeks of fighting.
8. (1805-1881); French revolutionary thinker.
9. Louis Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877); French statesman. After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) he was chosen chief Executive of the Provisional government. Soon after, he became the President of the Republic, which post he held for two years.
10. A well-known cemetery located between Menilmontant and the Place de la Nation.

During the revolution of 1905<sup>11</sup>, in Russia, the Soviet system already took definite shape. It grew and developed and changed continuously, till it found itself firmly established in the seats of power in 1917. Its growth became rapid after the Bolshevik revolution, and it has since been continuously adapting itself to changing conditions.

The main characteristic of the Soviet system is its open recognition of the fact that society consists of different social groups or classes, each with different economic interests. So long as this condition lasts, every government must express the relative importance and strength of these social classes. The long course of history is interpreted as a conflict between these different social groups or classes. We thus have what is called the economic interpretation of history, or historic materialism. In each historic period, we are told, there is a dominating class, and the interests of other classes are only considered in so far as they serve to prolong or strengthen this domination. But this domination of one class over the others is seldom, if ever, clearly and openly expressed in the form of government. It is disguised in various ways to delude those who are exploited by it, and, where changes are slow, the dominating class creates an impression of eternal rights and duties, to safeguard its own interests. As society changes and newer and higher forms of the economic and social structure develop, new classes representing this development come to the front. These classes gradually get the upper hand over those older ones which had become obstacles to further development.

The dominating class controls the culture and education and the laws and customs of the people, but it always covers up its class character, specially when a new class begins to resist and to demand its own rights. Even present day 'democracy', according to the communists, is a form of government based on class domination, although it seeks cleverly to cover its class character. It is not in reality a social or human democracy. Its essential characteristic is to split up society into a number of individuals with the fiction of equality, and to organise the dominating class into a formidable capitalist state against which individuals or divided groups are powerless. Its class character can be seen when efforts are made to organise other classes. Our present day democracies then ruthlessly suppress all such organisations.

11. In 1905, as Russia suffered reverses in the war against Japan, a series of strikes and mutinies led to the first revolution of 1905. Its only results were the temporary grant of some civil rights and the establishment of a consultative Duma.

The Soviets<sup>12</sup> in Russia from the very beginning appeared as class organisations of workers. They were quite separate from the labour unions, although the advanced elements of the latter participated in the Soviets and combined with other similar elements. During the Kerensky period in 1917 the power of the Soviets increased greatly, till with Lenin's slogan, "All power to the Soviets", they became a rival and competing government.

During the earlier period before the revolution the Soviets represented the working class only. Then the soldiers and sailors came in, and later the peasants. But the peasantry were not given quite the same representation as the workers, as the latter were considered the more progressive group. Intellectuals were also allowed to participate but such as were in the service of the capitalist elements were excluded. The richer peasants were at first admitted but later most of them were excluded. Those living from the labour of others or on rent, old Tsarist officers generally and priests, were excluded, but some exceptions were made. In effect, the exclusions affected a comparatively small number of persons, amounting to 3.7 per cent of the adult population.

The governing principle under which groups are included or excluded is said to be as follows: those groups or classes that are necessary or useful to the development of society at a certain stage should be admitted at that stage, and the most progressive element should have the opportunity to exercise influence in accordance with its energy and social significance. The power of exclusion or inclusion ultimately rests with the All Russia Congress of Soviets — the highest governing body. The principle to be followed was laid down by the 3rd All R. S. Congress in January 1918 — "There must be no participation in the Soviet government by members of the exploiting classes". This was embodied in the constitution as adopted by the 5th All R.S. Congress in July 1918. The actual lists of exclusions are made by committees that supervise the elections for the different local soviets. These lists are subject to discussion and appeal to higher soviets and ultimately to the All Russia Soviet Congress or its executive committee. Communists declare that these exclusions are only necessary in the present transitional stage and that as the system develops it will embrace all useful human beings working with their hands or brains. This may be the ultimate result but for the present the system certainly helps greatly in the control of the State by a strong and well-knit minority. But the minority will not long remain in power if it has not got the support or at any rate the passive acquiescence of the masses. Hence we have

12. Council of workers and peasants.

what is called the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which in effect means the dictatorship of an advanced class-conscious and disciplined group claiming to represent and to possess the goodwill of the masses. In defence of this dictatorship communists point out that present-day democracies are in reality also dictatorships. But the latter are dictatorships of the capitalist class or the bourgeoisie and are meant to further the interests of this class. They are the dictatorships of the 10 per cent or less, whilst the dictatorship of the proletariat is supposed to be of the 90 per cent.

The characteristic feature of the Soviet system is its method of representation. It is not, as in most democratic countries, based on territorial or geographical constituencies, where the individual is the unit. The structure of the soviets is based on economic and social units, e.g., factories, villages, co-operatives, trade unions, etc. The number of delegates elected are proportional to the number of voters, small units combining for the purpose of electing representatives. There is one important deviation however from proportionality—the village, electing one delegate for 10,000 voters, the town, one delegate for 2,000 voters. The town dwellers, which means chiefly the industrial workers, are considered more advanced socially and are thus given more weightage.

The village soviet is said to be the soul of the village. The word 'soviet' means *sabha* and a village soviet would correspond to a *panchayat* elected by almost all the residents of an Indian village. This soviet is elected by show of hands at a kind of public meeting at which all the residents, men and women above a certain age, with certain exceptions, have the right to be present and to vote. The exceptions are rich peasants living by the labour of others, usurers, priests and such other elements as may be considered parasitical and unsocial. If there are any small industries or public institutions in the village, they will also send delegates direct to the Soviet. So also the local co-operative society, the Union of peasant labourers, women's organisations and the Young People's League.

There is generally a big non-communist majority in the village soviet, but a few communists are always present, and as these are usually the most active and intelligent members, their influence is considerable.

Most of the questions touching the daily life of the villagers are decided by the village soviet, subject to a right of appeal to higher soviets, which are also empowered to interfere when necessary. Thus the village soviet will deal with land problems and specially the distribution of land, the distribution of seeds for cultivation, wood to be cut in common forests, taxes according to general regulations, building

of schools and medical halls, medical service, fire protection, mutual aid, etc. The Soviet also serves as a link between the various other organisations in the village, and there is a growing number of these co-operative mutual aid societies, women's organisations, Young People's Leagues, Pioneers (corresponding to the Boy Scouts), international aid societies, etc.

Two other important features of the Soviet system might be mentioned here. The first is the power of recall. Each constituency has the right to recall its representatives in any soviet at any time. In other countries, as is well-known, representatives to the legislatures are elected for a fixed period of three or four or five years and cannot be recalled. The second feature is the combination of the legislative and executive functions in the soviets. But it is not quite clear how this is done.

It is claimed that the soviet system reflects the real life of the community far more than any other. It is responsive and flexible and can be made to fit changing conditions so that the natural growth of a people to a better order is not impeded in any way.

## 5. The Constitution of the USSR<sup>1</sup>

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.) was formed in December, 1922. Before the formation of the Union there were four separate republics: the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), Ukraine, White Russia and Transcaucasia. They carried on an independent existence but were allied to each other and had mutual agreements on many matters. The decision to form a Union was arrived at separately by the allied republics at their respective Congresses of Soviets. These Congresses also chose delegates to take part in framing a constitution<sup>2</sup> for the Union.

Originally these were the four members of the Union but in 1925 two other republics joined it. The Union now consists of the R.S.F.S.R., Ukraine, White Russia, Transcaucasia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Two of these constituent members are themselves federations. Thus the

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 24 May 1928.

2. The Constitution of 1924 which replaced the first constitution of 1918. This Constitution remained in force till a new constitution was approved in 1936.

R.S.F.S.R. consists of nine republics : Crimean, Tartar, Bashkir, Buriot-Mongolian, Keghiz, Karelian, Dagestan, Lakut and the German Volga Republic. The Transcaucasian F.S.S.R., consists of three republics : Azerbaijan, Armenian and Georgian. Besides these separate republics there are a large number of autonomous regions, there being twelve such in the R.S.F.S.R., alone.

All these republics are supposed to be sovereign except in so far as powers have been assigned to the Union. Among these powers which have been assigned are foreign relations, acceptance of new republics into the Union, and certain aspects of trade and taxation. The Union, says article four of the Constitution, is 'a voluntary union of equal peoples' and 'each of the Soviet republics retains the right of free secession from the Union....the new United State is a worthy crown of the foundations laid in October, 1917, of the peaceful dwelling together and the brotherly collaboration of peoples'.

The constitution of the Union can be changed just like any other law. It is thus flexible and easily adaptable to new conditions. It is based on the recognition of the national differences and freedom to develop different cultures. It is entirely opposed to the autocratic unitary state of the old regime which tried to impose its own language and culture on all the various nationalities under its control.

The supreme authority is the All Union Congress. The Union Council is elected on the basis of proportional representation of each constituent republic, and the Council of Nationalities is elected on the basis of five members for every republic and one for each autonomous region. Thus in the Council of Nationalities, the R.S.F.S.R., the principal and dominating republic of the Union, has the same number of representatives as any of the smaller republics.

The Central Executive Committee of the All Union Congress is comparable in some measure to a Parliament, the Congress itself consisting of over 1,100 members and meeting only once in six months. All legislation has to pass both chambers of the Committee. Thus the Council of Nationalities has a determining voice in all important matters. It is therefore claimed that the various autonomous republics have not only full opportunities of developing their own economic and social life and culture, but they take part in a decisive manner in the general government of the Union.

All Soviets and their executives and representatives are elected annually. Only the All Union Congress is elected every second year.

The All Union Congress also elects the heads of various departments, the Commissars, and these form the Union Council of Peoples' Commissars which is practically the cabinet of the Union.

Each constituent republic has its own Soviet Congresses, Central Executive Committee and Council of Peoples' Commissars. Certain departments, e.g., foreign affairs, are reserved for the Union Government; certain others exist both in the Union and the individual republics, e.g., supreme economic council, labour, finance, etc., and many exist only in the republics, e.g., agriculture, justice, education, health, social welfare, etc.

In each republic the soviet system is built up from village and factory upwards by means of indirect and direct elections. Thus the village soviet elects the rural District Soviet Congress and its executive committee, and the latter the Provincial Soviet Congress, which in its turn sends representatives to the Republican Congress. In the towns the urban Soviet elects the District as well as directly the Provincial Soviet. The Provincial Soviets elect representatives for the Republican Congress, but town areas have also the right of direct representation in this Congress. Thus the rural areas are represented very indirectly in the All Russia or other Republican Congress whilst the town areas are represented both directly and indirectly.

In the rural soviets, both the village and the district, the peasants are in a considerable majority. But gradually the proportion of communists increases in the higher soviet organs and they are in absolute control of all positions of power. The All Russian Soviet is entirely dominated by them.

The Communist Party, although it has apparently no official status in the constitution is really a pillar of the Soviet regime. It is a solid exclusive organisation representing the advanced elements of the working class and with a very definite purpose and programme. It is well organised and the discipline is military in its severity. The conviction of the communist that he represents the interests of the future of humanity can only be compared with the faith and zeal of a religious enthusiast. The party admits intellectuals and peasants to its ranks but only such as understand and appreciate the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is not very easy to join the party, and to preserve its purity there are periodical 'cleansings', as they are called, when those who are considered undesirable are excluded. The power of the party may be judged from the fact that the most powerful individual in the Soviet Union today is Stalin,<sup>3</sup> the general secretary of the party<sup>4</sup>, although he holds no other high official position.

3. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953); Soviet statesman who was a colleague of Lenin and eventually his successor. His name will always be associated with the policy of 'Socialism in one Country' and with leadership in the war against Germany.

4. In 1922 Stalin was elected general secretary of the Communist Party.

There are large numbers of boards and commissions performing various duties, the most important being the Supreme Economic Council with its offshoots. The industrial units, such as Labour Unions, etc., are also essential parts of the State organisations. They are built on industrial lines, not those of craft. Thus all workers in a big industry belong to one union, whether they are miners, carpenters or mechanics. Then there is the wide ramification of co-operative societies and organisations of women, youth, pioneers, etc.

The Labour Unions and factory committees look after the interests of the workers in the factory, but the manager or board of managers of any industry are appointed by the Supreme Economic Council on behalf of the All Russian Soviet. In case there is a conflict between the manager and labour, there is a system of conflict committees and appeals. The manager may be removed or transferred.

Such in brief are some of the features of the Soviet constitution. It is admittedly framed to keep all power in the hands of the workers, and to give no quarter to capitalism or to those who want to bring back capitalism. Whether capitalism may not creep back in disguise in some form or other is a difficult question to answer. But in their fight against it the Bolsheviks do not propose to be guided by "bourgeois democracy". In the manifesto<sup>5</sup> of the first Communist International issued under the signatures of Lenin, Trotsky and others in March, 1919, it was stated that "to demand of the proletariat in the final life and death struggle with capitalism, that it should obey lamb-like the precepts of bourgeois democracy would be the same as to ask a man who is defending his life against robbers to follow the artificial rules of a French duel that have been set by his enemy but not followed by him".

We have the dictatorship of the proletariat today. But this, we are told, is a period of transition only, or a period of preparation for the great time to come when class conflicts will entirely cease as there will be only one class, and the State itself will sink into insignificance. That will be real communism, which, in the words of the communist manifesto, "will end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries, transform the whole world into one co-operative commonwealth and bring about real human brotherhood and freedom".

5. This manifesto was drafted by Trotsky and adopted unanimously by the first Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in March 1919.

## 6. Some Books on Russia<sup>1</sup>

I remember attending a banquet given by the scientists and professors in Moscow. There were people from many countries present and speeches in a variety of languages were made. I remember specially a speech given by a young student who had come from far Uruguay in South America. He had come on behalf of his fellow students to see this strange land for himself and the impressions he had gathered had filled him with fiery enthusiasm. He spoke in the beautiful sonorous periods of the Spanish language and he told us that he was going back to his distant country with the red star of Soviet Russia engraved on his heart and carrying the message of social freedom to his young comrades in Uruguay. Such was the reaction of Soviet Russia on his young and generous heart. And yet there are many who tell us that Russia is a land of anarchy and misery and the Bolsheviks are assassins and murderers who have cast themselves outside the pale of human society.

Who is right? Or is it that both are right in some measure? I shall not venture to pass judgment or to give final opinions. I too am impressionable and I must confess that the impressions I carried back with me from Moscow were very favourable and all my reading has confirmed these impressions, although there is much that I do not understand and much that I do not like or admire. I shall only note down what I saw and leave it to others to draw their own conclusions, well realising that what I saw was a very small part of what might have been seen.

But personal impressions, as Professor K.T. Shah<sup>2</sup> has pointed out in his interesting series of lectures (*The Russian Experiment 1917-1927*<sup>3</sup>, Taraporevala), are seldom very reliable guides although they may give a touch of colour to a bald narrative. Those who are interested should go to the books on the subject and read both sides of the question. There is already a vast and growing literature and as I have often

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 4 April 1928.
2. Professor of Economics, Bombay University and Secretary of the National Planning Council, 1938-47; d. 1953.
3. Published in 1927.

been asked to suggest books on Russia, I shall name some that I have come across. There are quite a large number of books in English written in criticism of the Bolshevik regime. Pro-Bolshevik literature is not so well represented in English as in German and other languages. But recently a number of little books have come out in English which though critical of many aspects of communism are written with some sympathy for its basic ideas and achievements.

A proper study of Bolshevism must start with some knowledge of the theory of communism and its historical development. "Ignorance and communism are incompatible," said Blanqui, the father of the Paris Commune of 1871, and it is extraordinary how even today communists are eager to educate everyone in the principles of their doctrine. If they wish to convert any one they will hurl at him a number of fat tomes from Marx's *Capital* — the Bible of the communists — and Engel's writings to the books of Lenin and Bukharin. But life is perhaps too short to read all this heavy literature. A little book by the master of Balliol College, Oxford, A.D. Lindsay<sup>4</sup>, on *Karl Marx's Capital*<sup>5</sup> (Oxford University Press) is helpful in giving some idea of Marx's theories. It is a critical book and even more so is F. R. Salter's *Karl Marx and Modern Socialism*<sup>6</sup> (Macmillan). The communist viewpoint is best given in Bukharin's *Historic Materialism*<sup>7</sup> (George Allen and Unwin) and his *Economic Theory of the Leisure Class*<sup>8</sup> (Martin Lawrence). Bogdonoff's<sup>9</sup> *Short Course of Economic Science*<sup>10</sup> (Communist Party, London) is still I believe used as a text book in Russia. There are several books of Lenin available, I think in English, but the only one I have come across is his *Imperialism — The Last Stage of Capitalism*<sup>11</sup> (Communist Party, London). Those who are interested in the controversy between the Bolsheviks and the German Karl Kautsky<sup>12</sup>, who though vigorously attacking the Bolsheviks claims to be a true follower of Marx, may like to read Kautsky's *The Labour Revolution*<sup>13</sup> (George Allen and Unwin). Lenin replied to this, and

4. (1879-1952); later Lord Lindsay of Birker; Master of Balliol College, Oxford, 1924-49.
5. Published in 1925.
6. Published in 1921.
7. Published in (1921), 1926.
8. Published in 1927.
9. Russian Marxist philosopher.
10. Published in 1923.
11. Published in 1924.
12. Karl Johann Kautsky (1854-1938); German-Austrian socialist and a dominant figure in the Second International.
13. Published in (1922), 1925.

Trotsky's<sup>14</sup> brilliant polemic *In Defence of Terrorism*<sup>15</sup> is also a reply.

A very ably written book is Prof. Laski's<sup>16</sup> *Communism*<sup>17</sup>, in the Home University Library. It criticises the theory and practice, and it has called forth, I am told, an equally able reply from the British Communist Party, but I have not seen the latter.

These books, or even some of them, should enable the enquirer to have some idea of what the Bolsheviks stand for. Two other controversial books might also be mentioned; Trotsky's *Where is Britain Going?*<sup>18</sup> and Norman Angell's<sup>19</sup> *Must Britain Follow the Moscow Road?*<sup>20</sup> (Noel Douglas). Another book — *The Bolshevik Theory*<sup>21</sup> by R.W. Postgate<sup>22</sup> (Grant Richards) is a clear and good and sometimes critical account of the theory underlying the Soviet system, but the book is somewhat out of date, unless a new edition has come out since 1920.

Thus far the theory. But to understand the great drama of the Russian Revolution and the inner forces that shaped and brought the great change about, a study of cold theory is of little use. The October Revolution<sup>23</sup> was undoubtedly one of the great events of world history, the greatest since the first French Revolution, and its story is more absorbing, from the human and the dramatic point of view, than any tale or phantasy. Something of its elemental power can be felt in two accounts of eye witnesses, an Englishman and an American. The former, M. Phillips Price<sup>24</sup>, was the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Russia, and in his book — *My Reminiscences of*

14. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940); one of Lenin's chief colleagues in the Russian revolution. He was War Minister and leader of the Soviet delegates at the Brest-Litovsk peace conference of 1917-18. Dismissed by Stalin in 1925, he became in 1929 a wandering exile. He was murdered in Mexico in 1940.
15. Published in 1921.
16. Harold Joseph Laski (1893-1950); British political scientist; Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics for several years; Chairman of the British Labour Party, 1945-46.
17. Published in 1927.
18. Published in (1925), 1926.
19. Sir Norman Angell (1872-1967), British writer on international relations and author of *The Great Illusion*; awarded Nobel Prize in 1933.
20. Published in 1920.
21. Published in 1920.
22. Raymond William Postgate (b. 1896); British leftwing writer.
23. The revolution of November 1917 (October according to the old calendar).
24. (B. 1885); correspondent of *Manchester Guardian* in Russia, 1914-18; Correspondent of *Daily Herald* in Berlin, 1919-23.

*the Russian Revolution*<sup>25</sup> (George Allen and Unwin), he has told us the day to day story of Russia during those eventful days. From the March Revolution he has told the story, when Kerensky came into power; of how the red dawn broke in Moscow and the shackles of centuries of Tsardom were suddenly removed; of the coming of Lenin and of how he was jeered at in the very Soviet which a few months later was to make him the dictator of a vast territory; of the pitiful shufflings of Kerensky and his weak compromises with reaction; of the growth of the soviets and their victory and ultimate capture by the Bolsheviks. He has also told us of the months of struggle against external and internal enemies, when the Soviet power held on by a thread, by sheer tenacity, when all hope seemed to be lost.

The second book — *Ten Days that Shook the World*<sup>26</sup> — is by John Reed<sup>27</sup>, an American correspondent. This deals in even greater detail with the first ten days of the October Revolution. And as one reads, with horror and pain at times, the wonder grows that such a miracle could have happened and succeeded. And above all there is admiration for the group of men who did not flinch at the mightiest of obstacles, and, in the midst of war and rebellion, with a cruel death and disaster continually facing them, sat down to evolve a socialist order out of the chaos that surrounded them. They had time even on the fourth day of the revolution, with firing going on in the streets, to establish the eight hour day for the workers and formulate their policy for a system of popular education. Within a week they had tackled the problem of minorities, which like the poor is always with us in India, and declared :

- “ 1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
- 2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.
- 3. The abolition of any and all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities.
- 4. The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.”

25. Published in 1921.

26. Published in 1919.

27. An American Communist writer who died in Moscow and was buried in the Kremlin wall.

## 7. Lenin

I have already referred to a number of books which might help in understanding the background of the Russian Revolution. Like every other great upheaval it had its causes deep down in history and in the misery of generations of human beings. Economic factors, we are told, govern the world and politics is rapidly becoming a handmaid of economics. But Russia also repeats the lesson of history that men also shape destiny and sometimes the will of one man alters the lives of millions. It is instructive therefore to study the careers of some of the makers of the revolution, who out of anarchy and chaos created a new and strong Russia. Exiles, with no knowledge of military affairs, creating great and victorious armies; with no experience of diplomacy, treating successfully with the well-seasoned diplomats of other countries; with no knowledge of business or administration, running an enormous state machine which controlled all production and distribution. Specially it is worth-while to know something of the greatest of these—Lenin.

Many people have paid their tribute of admiration to him, but I have unfortunately not come across a satisfactory account of his life.\* A book which will interest Indian readers is Rene Fullop-Miller's<sup>2</sup> *Lenin and Gandhi*<sup>3</sup> (Putnam). It is somewhat superficial and does not satisfy, but it contains some good pen pictures of Lenin. A short and interesting sketch of Lenin is also to be found in Emil Ludwig's<sup>4</sup> *Genius and Character*<sup>5</sup> (Jonathan Cape).

Four years ago Lenin died<sup>6</sup>. He was just over fifty, of which thirty years had been spent in preparation and ceaseless toil varied with persecution and flight in Siberia<sup>7</sup>. Victory came to him in the end but with it

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 April 1928.

\* A recent book, highly spoken of, is *Lenin*, by Valerian Marcus. Translated from the German into English (Victor Gollancz).

2. Author; visited Russia several times after World War I.

3. Published in 1927.

4. (1881-1948); German biographer; his works include lives of Goethe, Napoleon and Bismarck.

5. Published in 1927.

6. Lenin died on 21 January 1924.

\* 7. Lenin was arrested in December 1895, kept in prison for over a year and sentenced to three years exile in Siberia. He was released in February 1900.

came years of tremendous difficulty and danger. He died as the result of a bullet wound but before he died he had conquered over these difficulties and dangers and he passed away in the knowledge of his triumph. Today he lies embalmed in a simple mausoleum in the beautiful Red Square of Moscow under the shadow of the Kremlin. He lies asleep as it were and it is difficult to believe that he is dead. In life they say he was not beautiful to look at. He had too much of common clay in him and about him was the "smell of the Russian soil." But in death there is a strange beauty and his brow is peaceful and unclouded. On his lips there hovers a smile and there is a suggestion of pugnacity, of work done and success achieved. He has a uniform on and one of his hands is lightly clenched. Even in death he is the dictator.

To this resting place of Lenin's body come people from distant parts to do reverence to his memory. Every evening the doors are thrown open for some hours and a continuous stream of the peasants and workers, for whom he lived and died and who loved him, passes by. The orthodox Church is at a discount in Russia but the cult of Lenin is everywhere in evidence. Every shop, every room almost, has his picture or bust. "In a religious age," says Maxim Gorki<sup>8</sup>, "people would have made him a saint." In India he would certainly have been canonised, but saints are not held in repute in Soviet circles, and the people of Russia have done him the higher honour of loving him as one of themselves. To each of them he was a brother, a comrade, who knew and laboured for them and to whom they could always turn when in distress.

"I know a pair of eyes which have been for ever numbed by the burning sorrow of the Terror," said Gorky of Lenin. This sorrow did not leave him to the end. It made him a fierce fanatic and gave him the strength of will to persevere and achieve. But sorrow for the misery of his fellow men did not make him gloomy or reserved. He was "filled to the brim with the sap of life," and even "in the unhappiest moments of his existence, he was serene and always prone to gay laughter."

Lenin's early years were typical of the man. When he was seventeen his elder brother was hanged<sup>9</sup> for an attempt on the life of the Tsar. He was profoundly moved but even then he saw clearly that nothing could be gained by terroristic methods.

8. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936); Russian novelist and dramatist.

9. Lenin's elder brother, Alexander, was a terrorist who in 1887 was implicated in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander III and was executed.

"We cannot succeed in that way; it is not the right way," he said. But that did not mean his giving up the struggle. He set about preparing in his own way. It was a long way and a wearisome way but quietly and persistently he worked at it for thirty years of his life. He did not suddenly develop into a champion of the workers. He paid little attention to speaking in public or writing, but set himself down to investigate and understand thoroughly the masses. In after years he had little patience with orators and fine speakers; he was always afraid of too many words preventing action. For him action was the only thing that counted. "Revolutions," according to him, "must not remain on paper, they must be carried out in action; and the proper execution of even the most unimportant measure was more important for the existence of Soviet Russia than ten Soviet resolutions." Thus, as Maxim Gorky has said: "His heroism lacked almost all external glitter. It was the modest ascetic zeal, not seldom seen in Russia, of a revolutionary who believed in the possibility of justice on earth, the heroism of a man who, for the sake of his heavy task, renounced all worldly joys."

A classic instance is often given of his utter calmness in emergency and his attention to trivial detail even when the life of the State was threatened. During the critical days of 1921 when Moscow itself was threatened by the enemy and most people thought that the Soviet power was going to collapse, Lenin thought of the introduction of electric light in the villages<sup>10</sup> and issued an ordinance for the immediate supply of electric light to certain areas.

Lenin has been called the coldest of fanatics. He would never let himself be carried away by enthusiasm and would not give in to the best of his friends even at the risk of a break. He had no use for sympathisers who did not actively join the fray. Only full-blooded adherents were to his liking, experts in revolution who devoted themselves wholly to the cause. Revolution was to be prepared for cautiously and quietly by educating "revolutionary experts, men who were revolutionaries by profession and not mere enthusiasts, idealists or dilettanti." He realised, what we in India are dimly beginning to appreciate, that it is a difficult, if not an impossible task, for amateurs, with little time to spare from their daily routine and no special training, to

10. Rural electrification was one of Lenin's pet projects. He wrote to the Chairman of the State Planning Commission (which had been set up in February 1921) that 'a plan must be worked out for the installation of electric light in every house in the R.S.F.S.R.' A special body called the State Commission for Electrification was created to draw up the plan. This plan was later used by the State Planning Commission.

fight whole-timers who are experts at their business of defending the existing regime. "Let our comrades", he wrote, "permit the use of the rigorous term 'technical expert' for when I speak of inadequate preparations the accusation applies also to myself. I have worked with men who set themselves to very high and difficult responsibilities, yet we suffered painfully from the feeling that we were but amateurs. The more ashamed I am to confess this, the more bitter I feel towards those sham socialists who fail to realise that we dare not lower the revolutionary to the level of the amateur." With how much greater truth does this apply to all of us in India who dabble in politics!

Lenin was no believer in a patched up unity of which we hear so much in our country. He deliberately broke up his party<sup>11</sup> as early as 1903 by his insistence on action, and was accused by his own colleague, Trotsky, of being the "destroyer of the party." He insisted that the rules of the party should lay down that each member must actively participate in the work and not merely give monetary help. The majority of the party wanted to give sympathy and financial aid only, but Lenin would have neither unless action followed. And so the men of action separated from the men of sympathy and money. When later he was approached with proposals for unity he said with a smile: "I recognise only one form of conciliation with political opponents, *eraser*—smash them," words spoken without the least emotion or excitement.

Gradually his colleagues left him but he had no fear and did not budge an inch: "I shall perhaps be alone," he said, "but I shall never be turned aside from my opinions: I shall never cease to champion them and follow the straight line."

And yet, fanatic as he was and unbending, he was a realist and ever willing to change his policy if the situation demanded it. Lunacharsky, a friend of his and the present Commissar of Education in Russia, has called him "a genius at opportunism." "It is childish," Lenin wrote, "to reject compromise on principle.... One must simply know how to analyse the circumstances and the concrete conditions of each issue." And again when accused of departing from some maxim of socialism he said: "You are worse than hens. A hen has not the courage to cross a chalk-line, but it can at least justify itself by pointing out that

11. At a meeting of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party held at London in 1903 Lenin brought about the split of the party into the Bolsheviks (extreme wing of the Russian Socialist party) and the Mensheviks, the moderates.
12. A. V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933); Russian revolutionary, dramatist and critic; was Commissar of Education from 1917 to 1920

the chalk circle was drawn by somebody else. But you have drawn your own circle and are now gazing at the chalk-line instead of seeing reality!" Perhaps we may find many of these chalk-lines of our own making in India also, which keep us from looking at reality.

One of the greatest shocks that he gave to his followers was after the failure of the 1905 revolution. Not daunted by this, the advocate of an armed rising suddenly recommended<sup>13</sup> a participation in the moderate and semi-official Duma<sup>14</sup>, and asked his adherents to study the detailed reports of its sessions. This was with no desire to give up his principles or to adopt the evolutionary method. But he felt that the only platform open to him then for carrying on revolutionary propaganda was through the Duma. He was decried as a weakling and a victim of parliamentarianism; but regardless of censure he pursued his path, nonetheless keeping armed revolution as his goal. To us in India with our controversies about Council entry his change of front must prove interesting.

In these days of pacts and unity conferences Lenin's views on the subject may be of interest. In a letter to a friend in 1912 he wrote: "The bourgeoisie, the liberals and the social revolutionaries, who never deal with 'great problems' seriously, but trot one behind the other, make pacts and go on in the old grooves with eclecticism, are always crying out about the dissensions and discords in social democracy. That is the exact difference between all of them and social democracy; the fight between the individual social democratic groups comes from deep roots of thought whereas with them even the differences are varnished over on the surface, while inside they are empty, petty, superficial. Never at any price would I exchange the vigorous fighting of the various tendencies in social democracy for the togged-up emptiness and poverty of the social revolutionaries and their partners."

So Lenin prepared for the great day. And when this came, early in 1917, and he was summoned from Switzerland to his country to lead the revolution, he left a message to the Swiss workers<sup>15</sup>. There was

13. Lenin was of the view that the Duma could be treated as a forum for propaganda. The tactics of boycott, he wrote in September 1906, must be 'reconsidered': 'history had demonstrated' that the Duma is a valuable forum for agitation.

14. The Russian Parliament created by Nicholas II in response to demands in the Revolution of 1905. The First Duma sat from 10 May to 21 July 1905; the second from 2 March to 16 June 1907; the third from the end of 1907 to 1912; and the fourth from 1912 to 1917.

15. Lenin's 'Farewell letter to the Swiss Workers' (26 March/8 April 1917). See *Selected Works*, Vol. VI (London, 1946), pp. 13—20.

no hint of excitement or exultation at the approaching fruition of the labour of a lifetime. Carefully, like a scientist, he stated what the conditions in Russia were and what he wished to do.

It is difficult for most of us to think of our ideals and our theories in terms of reality. We have talked and written of Swaraj for years, but when Swaraj comes it will probably take us by surprise. We have passed the independence resolution at the Congress, and yet how many of us realise its full implications? How many belie it by their words and actions? For them it is something to be considered as a distant goal, not as a thing of today or tomorrow. They talk of Swaraj and independence in their conferences and their councils but their minds are full of reservations and their acts are feeble and halting.

In Russia also the revolutionaries of an older generation lived in a world of theory, and hardly believed in the realisation of their ideals. But Lenin came with his directness and realism and shook the fabric of old time orthodox socialism and revolution. He taught people to think that the ideal they had dreamed of and worked for was not mere theory but something to be realised then and there. By amazing power of will he hypnotised a nation and filled a disunited and demoralised people with energy and determination and the strength to endure and suffer for a cause.

Many had their full share in this remarkable triumph, among them specially Trotsky, who now lies in Siberia. But Lenin stood supreme. Saint or sinner, the miracle was chiefly of his doing. And we may well say with Romain Rolland, that Lenin was "the greatest man of action in our century, and at the same time the most selfless."

## 8. More Books<sup>1</sup>

I have suggested that an attempt to understand Russia as she is today should begin with the study of the theory of communism, and the history of the Russian Revolution. With my very limited knowledge of the subject I have mentioned the names of a few books that might help in this enquiry. But the real test of the success of the revolution does not lie in the theory, or in the courage and enthusiasm of the

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 6 April 1928.

people, or even in the greatness of Lenin. Nor can the revolution be said to have been a failure because the Bolsheviks ruthlessly exterminated their opponents and countered the white terror with the red. The real test of success can only be the measure of happiness of the masses of the people. It is partly a question of psychology, but partly also of material conditions, and facts and figures. It is not easy to judge the psychology of a people without the most intimate knowledge. It may be that freedom from oppression is preferable even though it results in a diminution of material well-being for a time; and visitors to Russia tell us that in the early years of the revolution when civil war and the blockade had brought the population to the verge of starvation, the new freedom more than compensated for the suffering and lack of food and all comforts. But leaving the realms of psychology alone, we can at least study the material conditions that have resulted from the revolution and follow their changes from year to year, and thus perhaps be able to indicate the lines of future progress or retrogression.

There is now an abundance of material for this study but my own knowledge of it is unfortunately meagre. I shall only mention here some of the books I have read and some I have heard spoken of. *Bolshevist Russia*<sup>2</sup> by Anton Karlgren, Professor of Slav at the University of Copenhagen (George Allen and Unwin), is patently anti-Bolshevik propaganda. I mention it so that the other side of the case may be fully known. Bertrand Russell's *Theory and Practice of Bolshevism*<sup>3</sup> (George Allen and Unwin), is also a criticism of the Soviet system, though a temperate one. Bertrand Russell and his wife both visited Russia, and it is curious that they returned with entirely different impressions — he was depressed with much that he saw, she was enthusiastic and believed that the foundations of a happier order were being laid by the Bolsheviks. Their visit took place in the earlier years before Russia had sufficiently recovered from the dark days of the civil war.

A ponderous book worth consulting, if only for the fine pictures it contains, is Rene Fulop-Miller's *Mind and face of Bolshevism*<sup>4</sup> (Putnam). It deals with the cultural side of Russia, and though very critical and not appreciative of much, is helpful in giving some idea of many of the tendencies of modern Russia.

2. Published in 1927.

3. Henry Noel Bradford (1873-1927), subsequently succeeded to Manchester *Guardian*, *Frigate*, *Daily News* and *Matador* Edition, The New Leader, 1922-26, wrote India in 1926.

2. Published in 1924.

3. Published in 1927.

4. Published in 1927.

A recent book, well recommended but which I have not read, is Maurice Dobb's<sup>5</sup> *Russian Economic Developments since the Revolution*<sup>6</sup> (Routledge). Dobb is an eminent economist with considerable sympathy for the basic ideas of the revolution, but withal critical and scientific. He deals with the growth and changes in Russia's economic policy, of the interaction of the communist in the cities and conservative peasantry in the villages, and specially with the effects on production.

Another recent publication is the report of the British Workers' Delegation to the Tenth Anniversary celebrations in Russia last year. This is called *Soviet Russia Today* (Labour Research Department, London). It is frankly a report of the friends of Russia, but is nonetheless valuable and full of information. It is signed by 92 representatives of workers' organisations in England and Scotland and no such document however partisan it may be can be lightly treated. It is not very critical and is full of enthusiasm for what they saw. Indeed as they themselves say. "No writing can adequately express the intense emotional experiences of every day of our visit, when we realised that in this country the crushing weight of feudalism and capitalism had been thrown off, and the highest achievements of knowledge and industrial development were here at the service of the working class." That Russia should produce such a reaction on representative hard-headed workers is itself a significant fact. It gives us a glimpse of how the Russian Revolution is creeping into the hearts of workers in different countries and Moscow is becoming the Mecca of the proletariat. Soviet Russia by translating their dreams into reality has given them a new hope and a new courage.

I remember meeting a Negro worker who had come from South Africa to the Brussels Congress against Imperialism. He was not a well-read or well-informed man; he was just a simple worker. He said at the Congress that although he had been told a great deal against Russia, somehow he felt that it could not be all true, and he and his kind had a soft corner in their hearts for Russia, and looked to her with hope.

This report of the British Labour Delegation gives us a great many facts and impressions in a short compass. It deals with the factories and working conditions; with wages, rents and housing; with education; with prisons; the peasantry; and co-operation. Having read it one feels that if only half of what is written is true, Russia indeed is a land of hope.

5. Maurice Herbert Dobb (b. 1900); British economist; Fellow of Trinity College and Reader in Economics, Cambridge University, 1959-67.

6. Published in 1928.

One other series of books I shall mention. This is now being issued by the Vanguard Press of New York, at 50 cents a volume, and it comprises 13 volumes dealing with almost every phase of life and work in Russia. The authors are distinguished writers, all with some special knowledge of the country. The first of the series is *How the Soviets Work*<sup>7</sup>, by H.N. Brailsford<sup>8</sup>. Then there are books on Russia's foreign policy, her religion, village life, economic organisation, the family, the schools, civil liberties, trade unions, national minorities, and art and culture. The series should be a valuable addition to the literature on Russia.

Russia has passed through ten years since the Bolshevik Revolution. But it must be remembered that the first five of these ten years were entirely taken up in war against foreign and internal enemies<sup>9</sup> and in the harder struggle against famine and blockade. A host of enemies attacked and tried to strangle her by cutting off her food supplies. For years the revolution hung in the balance and the economic life of the nation went to pieces. It is only during the past five years that she has had comparative peace and a chance to develop her resources. But even during this period she has had to contend against the hostility of most of the governments of Europe and of the super-capitalist United States of America. Having little money to develop her resources she has been denied credits and capital abroad. If she has progressed then during these five years it has been despite these difficulties. And the testimony of all competent observers is that she has progressed and has already made good the losses of the War period of eight years. Today her production is greater than it was in 1914 when the German war broke out and it is said to be increasing rapidly.

The United States of America do not officially recognise the Soviet Government, but in spite of this official hostility, the progress that Russia is making is attracting numbers of American businessmen to her and many professors and students who go to study conditions on the spot. Indeed Russia has many foreign visitors now, not the tourists who fill every corner of Western Europe, but earnest students and enquirers; not socialists only who go to admire, but thinking capitalists who go in search of business and to find out what this strange opponent

7. Published in 1927.
8. Henry Noel Brailsford (1873-1958); leader-writer successively to *Manchester Guardian*, *Tribune*, *Daily News* and *Nation*; Editor, *The New Leader*, 1922-26; visited India in 1930.
9. The Bolsheviks made peace with Germany in March 1918 but it was only after three years of civil war that the White Armies were defeated, and the Allies (U.S.A., Japan, France and Great Britain) withdrew their forces.

of their time-honoured ideas is like. The eastern countries are well represented in this band of enquirers — China, Persia and Afghanistan. They go to study specially the educational system, agriculture, co-operation and the military machine. During our visit to the Commissariat of Education in Moscow we were surprised to come across two high officials of the Afghan Ministry of Education — one of them an ex-student of Aligarh College.

It would be an excellent thing if our professors and students also paid visits of enquiry and studied the educational and agricultural developments in Russia. Their visits would be even more helpful to us than those of politicians. Our universities could easily arrange for a small but competent delegation for this purpose.

Our universities and others interested could also without any difficulty, unless the British Government intervenes, get into touch by means of letters with educational and cultural establishments in Russia and exchange publications with them. The Russians will welcome such co-operation and will gladly supply any information. They publish periodically pamphlets and little books in various languages, including English, showing the progress made. These will of course be entirely one-sided but they will represent the official viewpoint and they will give the latest figures. The Information Bureau of the Peoples' Commissariat of Education, Moscow, issues regularly statistics regarding education and annual reports.

The "Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries" issues a weekly bulletin in Russian, English, French and German, besides other publications. The address of this society is Malaya Nikitskaya, 6, Moscow.\*

\* The Soviet Union Year Book, published by George Allen and Unwin, is a mine of information.

## 9. The Peasantry<sup>1</sup>

Among the sights we saw in Moscow one of the most impressive was the Central Peasants' Home. It was an enormous building containing

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 May 1928.

museums, demonstration rooms, lecture rooms and residential accommodation for about 350 persons. Practically everything that might instruct the peasant was there. There was a fine display of agricultural produce, all ticketed and compared and explained. Several halls were full of the latest agricultural implements and machinery and models of up-to-date and sanitary houses and farms for the peasantry. Another part of the building was devoted to health propaganda. Pictures and posters and models explained how disease was to be avoided and homes kept clean and healthy.

A large hall was devoted solely to electricity and was full of working models showing its uses for lighting and agricultural purposes. Water pumps of various sizes worked by electric power were much in evidence. A big chart showed the rapid development of electric power stations all over Russia. The whole display was admirably designed to impress the peasant with the advantages of electricity from his own viewpoint.

Many peasants came to the Home and explanatory tours round the various show rooms were organised. Lectures took place daily on educational subjects of interest to the agriculturists and free legal and technical advice was given. Peasants were encouraged to stay in the Home for a maximum period of two months to go through a small course of agricultural training. The building had a restaurant attached where cheap meals were provided. We saw it crowded with rustics fresh from the country.

It was a remarkably fine institution and one felt that even one such centre must improve the lot of the peasantry. We were told, however, that such peasants' homes were springing up all over the Union, though most of them were much smaller than the Central Home. There was another in Moscow city for the Moscow district and there were about 350 of them in Russia proper, excluding Ukraine and Asiatic Russia, where also there were many such homes. These hundreds of homes must transform the outlook of the peasantry to a remarkable extent within a short time.

Russia, as is well known, is pre-eminently a land of peasants, and yet the burden of the revolution fell almost entirely, in its earlier stages, on the industrial workers. The city proletariats of Leningrad and Moscow were the spear-heads of the revolution and the peasantry was for some time poorly represented in the Soviets. Immediate advantage however was taken by the peasantry of the Soviet decree to nationalise land, and even without the intervention of the central authority they ejected the landlords and divided the land amongst themselves. Having done so the more prosperous of them were content and had no desire for further change or more revolution. Many of them knew

little about communism and cared less, and gradually they developed hostility to the Soviet power which did not view with favour the hoarding of corn and the profiteering in which the richer peasantry was indulging. The blockade of Russia by the western European nations and the possession of some of the richest food-producing areas in the South by hostile powers created a terrible crisis in the large cities and the Red army had to face starvation. Immediate and energetic steps were taken by the Soviet Government and the hoarded stores of food were commandeered from the richer peasantry.

This eased the situation but the inherent conflict between the advanced class-conscious city worker and the conservative peasantry attached to the soil, continued, and ultimately the latter made its weight felt. At the instance of Lenin the whole policy of the State was suddenly changed and what is called the "New Economic Policy"<sup>2</sup> was introduced. Whether Lenin was forced by circumstances to follow this line or, as some now assert, it was the natural and intended outcome of his policy, it is difficult to say. The period of militant communism<sup>3</sup> could not last long, but the manner of its ending certainly seemed to indicate that the pressure on the Government was great.

Lenin adapted himself to the circumstances even at the cost of some of the principles of communism. He gave in to the peasantry and to the petty traders, but his giant brain evolved a new and subtle scheme to introduce the industrial outlook amongst the peasantry. "What is communism?" asked Lenin once, and he himself gave the strange reply that it was "The Soviet Republic plus electrification." He laid down that the whole of Russia must be electrified. It was a stupendous project, for Russia is a vast country. But already it has made good progress and Russians point with great satisfaction and pride to large maps which show the many great power stations which have sprung up all over the country.

The power of the peasantry is undoubtedly growing in Russia. The seats of authority may be filled by workers and intellectuals but little can be done against the dead weight of the disapproval of the peasantry. The controversy between the rival groups in the communist party — Stalin v. Trotsky — is largely concerned with the attitude to be taken

2. A period of relative economic liberalisation — the period of the New Economic Policy which lasted from 1921 to 1928. NEP allowed limited private enterprise and trade.
3. The period of 'War Communism' from 1918 to 1921, when Russia had to face civil war and foreign intervention. There was extensive nationalisation, food requisitioning, and control over industry.

up on agrarian questions. The Stalin group which is predominant today is apparently more amenable to compromise with the peasants than the other group.

Some people assert that a new agrarian aristocracy is gradually being built up. There may be some such tendency but it is difficult to believe that it can go far. The whole apparatus of the State is against it, public opinion would not tolerate it, and the poorest classes have too much power to permit a group to monopolise wealth and economic power. By its system of taxation the State is always trying to level incomes up as far as possible. About 25 per cent of the peasant farms are exempt from the payment of the agricultural tax and it has been proposed to exempt an additional 10 per cent. They are exempt as their income is supposed to be barely sufficient to permit the peasants working them to live decently. On the comparatively richer classes the burden of taxation is consequently all the heavier.

Land in theory belongs to the State. In practice, the village Soviet divides it amongst the inhabitants, usually giving as much of it to a person as can be tilled by his family. The extent of the holding depends on the density of the population, and various schemes of colonisation are afoot to equalise to some extent at least this density. An individual or family holding land will probably continue to hold it, but if the family increases or decreases a corresponding change may be made in the size of the holding at the next redistribution by the village Soviet.

Some figures of the agricultural output in recent years may prove interesting. It must be remembered that Russia went through six or seven years of foreign and civil war, blockade and intervention, hunger and cold, general dilapidation and radical transformation of time-honoured social traditions. The whole machinery of the State was upset and recast. There was a continuous fall in output till 1921-22 when the tide turned. During this period of war and decline the peasantry lost about 30 per cent of able-bodied man power and there was a great destruction of livestock and implements. Cattle raising went down to 40 per cent and the area under cultivation dropped from 109 million dessiatines\* in 1914 to 75 million in 1922. These figures are taken from the report presented by Rykoff<sup>4</sup>, the Chairman of the Council of Peo-

\* A dessiatine is equal to about 2 3/4 acres.

4. A. I. Rykov (1881-1938); Russian revolutionary; became Commissar for the Interior after the October Revolution of 1917 and a member of the Politburo in 1922. On Lenin's death (1924) he succeeded as Chairman of the Council of Commissars (i.e. premier of the U.S.S.R.). He was expelled from the Politburo in 1930 and executed after a public trial for treason.

ples' Commissars, to the tenth anniversary session of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. in October, 1927. Rykoff also gave the following figures of the aggregate value of agricultural output.

In 1913	11,790 million roubles †
1921	6,900 million roubles
1926-27	12,776
Estimate for 1927-28	13,186

Thus in spite of the great fall in 1921 the pre-war level had already been reached and exceeded last year. The pre-war level of the area under cultivation and of cattle raising was also reached in 1927. The Central Government is investing large amounts of capital in agricultural improvements. In 1926-27 the figure was 418 million roubles; in 1927-28 it was proposed to invest 520 million roubles.

These figures, and they are supported by independent testimony, indicate rapid progress. The progress is remarkable when the manifold difficulties and the lack of aid from outside are considered.

† A rouble is roughly equivalent to 2 English shillings or Rs. 1.5-4.

## 10. Criminal Law<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is perhaps more confusing to the student of Russia than the conflicting reports that come of the treatment of prisoners and of the criminal law. We are told of the Red Terror and ghastly and horrible details are provided for our consumption; we are also told that the Russian prison is an ideal residence where any one can live in comfort and ease and with a minimum of restraint. Our own visit to the chief prison in Moscow created a most favourable impression on our minds. Probably there is a measure of truth in both the statements. But before we examine the practice it is desirable to study the theory of the criminal

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 May 1928.

law in Russia. It may be that there is a great divergence between theory and practice, but the former will at least tell us what ideals the Russians have placed before themselves.

The new Criminal Code came into force on the 1st January, 1927, in the R.S.F.S.R., that is, in Russia proper. I do not know if it applies to the other republics of the Union. Before 1927 the tribunals had a few decrees to guide them but were generally supposed to decide on grounds of common sense and equity. These tribunals were composed of workmen and peasants.

Under the new Code both the judge and the jury have to be chosen from men who enjoy political rights under the constitution of the U.S.S.R. Thus they must be workers, either manual or intellectual. Capitalists, persons living on rent and nep men (those who under the new economic policy practise a modified form of capitalism) and the like, are thus excluded. The tribunal is presided over by a judge elected for one year by the local soviet of workers and peasants. He is helped by two jury men chosen apparently also by the local soviet, that is by all the voters in the area. These jury men are constantly changed as each person serves once a year only, for six days at most. Thus great numbers of workers take part in the working of the tribunals. It was estimated that in 1926-27 over 5,00,000 workers and peasants helped the judges in this way throughout Russia.

Lenin specially desired that as many people as possible, and specially the poorest inhabitants of the country, should assist in the administration of justice. He declared that the Soviet power must call these poor people to help in the tribunals so that they may participate in the government of the country, and thus should identify themselves with the State. In this way they would quickly learn the science of political power.

The idea of 'punishment' is not approved of in the Soviet Code, and the word itself has been replaced by a phrase, "measures of social defence." There is a strict prohibition against the infliction of physical suffering or the doing of anything which lessens human dignity. Article 9 of the Code says:

"The measures of social defence do not have for their object the infliction of physical suffering or the lowering of human dignity, nor are they meant to avenge or punish."\*

\* This might be contrasted with article 978 of the United Provinces Jail Manual: "Labour in a jail should be considered primarily as a means of punishment and not of employment only; neither should the question of its being highly remunerative have much weight, the object of paramount importance being that prison work should be irksome and laborious and a cause of dread to evil doers."

Crime, according to the Soviet Criminal Law, is always the outcome of the antagonisms existing in a society divided into classes; it is always the result of a faulty social organisation and a bad environment.

These ideas about punishment and crime were first put forward and discussed in some detail by an Italian, Enrico Ferri<sup>2</sup>. But no state, with the exception of Soviet Russia, has so far incorporated them in its criminal code.

The convicts can thus more or less be called detenus, and the Soviet penitentiary system is based on the collective work of these detenus. Another method is compulsory work without the complete deprivation of liberty. The latter is the usual form for all except those who have committed serious offences.

The measures of social defence need not necessarily be applied to every act mentioned in the Code as being against social order. If in reality there is no danger, or the delinquent cannot be considered dangerous to society, the tribunal need not apply these measures to him. It may be also that the act committed though originally dangerous may have ceased to be so. Thus during the blockade of 1918, when there was great scarcity of food, the taking of false bread cards was a serious offence. In 1927 however there was no such scarcity and the offence had little meaning. Probably a tribunal would not punish any one now for having committed this offence even formerly.

The death penalty was abolished by the Soviet soon after they came to power, but only a few days later they had to reinstate it for acts of treason. It has also been applied in cases of corruption and embezzlement of public funds. Article 21 of the Code now states that:

"The penalty of death is a temporary measure of repression for the most serious crimes which threaten the very basis of the Soviet power and the proletarian State; it is only applied in exceptional cases of defence, pending its total abolition."

A proviso lays down that no pregnant woman, and no one who had not attained the age of 18 at the time he committed the crime, can suffer the death penalty.

The measures taken by the state against criminals are divided into three classes:

- (1) repressive;
- (2) medical treatment;
- (3) pedagogic treatment.

2. (1856-1929); Italian criminologist, who emphasised the social and economic factors underlying crime; recommended classification of criminals as a basis for preventive treatment.

The last named is for children and the young. The law forbids absolutely all judicial measures of correction for children up to the age of 14. From 14 to 16 such measures can only be taken on the report of a special commission, consisting of a doctor and an educationist, and if it is found that medical or pedagogic treatment will have no effect.

The various repressive measures taken by the state are:

1. The death penalty.
2. The criminal is declared an enemy of the workers, is deprived of his citizenship of the U.S.S.R., and is banished. Persons thus banished by the judgment of a court cannot enter the territories of the U.S.S.R. at their own will; should they do so they risk the penalty of death.
3. The deprivation of liberty for a period not exceeding ten years. Formerly the maximum period was five years but in 1922 this was increased to ten. In reality few convicts or detenus have to remain in jail ten years. But by a system of remissions for work done the period of ten years can be reduced by two or three years.
4. Compulsory labour without total deprivation of liberty. The person condemned is not kept in detention all the time. He can go on leave. For the peasants compulsory leave is given during the harvesting season and other periods when agricultural work has to be done.
5. Loss of civic rights.
6. Banishment for a period from the U.S.S.R.
7. Deportation from the R.S.F.S.R. (Russia proper) or from any other republic in the Union, with or without the obligation to live in a particular place.
8. For officials—dismissal, with or without a prohibition to occupy a particular post.
9. Prohibition to practise a particular profession.
10. Confiscation, total or partial, of goods.
11. Public blame.
12. Fine.

The Code lays down that in place of fine there can be no imprisonment, and no fine in place of imprisonment.

It is also laid down that counter-revolutionary crimes or treason include any acts against another workers' state even though it may not belong to the U.S.S.R. Russians of course pride themselves on not being national in the narrow sense. They believe in the international solidarity of workers and their slogan is not "Russians unite," but "workers of the world unite."

## 11. A Prison<sup>1</sup>

During our stay in Moscow we had occasion to visit a prison on the outskirts of the city. We were told that it was meant for the more serious offenders only. The building was an old one — it used to be a Tsarist prison — and was not prepossessing. On entering it we found ourselves in a lobby with many corridors radiating from it with cells on either side. There were three stories. We were asked by the governor of the prison to choose the cells we wished to see so that we might not think that we had been shown selected cells. The insistence on our choosing the cells ourselves was rather curious and seemed to indicate that the whole prison was more or less of a show place, specially meant for the edification of visitors.

We went inside some cells. They were narrow and uncomfortable with two or three cots in each. There appeared to be little ventilation but this was apparently avoided as much as possible owing to the great cold. The cells were not particularly clean or tidy. They had a number of books, and in two cells we saw radio sets which we were told had been fitted up by the prisoners concerned.

There were over 450 prisoners, most of them sentenced for the graver offences to long terms of imprisonment — the longest being ten years, which was usually reduced by two or three years for good work and good conduct. The whole prison staff consisted of about 52 or 53 persons including the governor, and the surgeon and his assistants. This number worked in three shifts of 8 hours a day each. Thus at one time there were not more than 17 or 18 members of the staff on duty. This seemed a small number specially as there were no convict warders. We were told that to appoint prisoners to watch other prisoners was considered very objectionable. We also noticed that the warders had no arms, not even sticks. Only two men at the principal entrance had bayonets.

The governor of the prison informed us that the idea underlying the prison system was not to punish or to make an example of the offender but to separate him from society and improve him by making him work in a disciplined manner. Indeed the very word 'prison' was not favoured as it savoured too much of old methods of vengeance and punishment.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 8 May 1928.

Instead, a long name, which I forget, but which signified a place for improvement by means of work, or some such thing, was given. The idea was that the human element in the prisoners must not be crushed. No numbers were given to them and as far as we could see no special dress was prescribed. We saw 25 to 30 prisoners walking about in the prison yard during an interval in their working hours, and there appeared to be nothing in their dresses to distinguish them. In this yard some games could be played, including basket-ball.

We asked if fetters and handcuffs were used. The Governor laughed and said that they kept these articles in their museums, and if we wanted to see them used we ought to go to bourgeois countries! Even when prisoners were taken outside the jail handcuffs or fetters were not used.

All the prisoners had to work 8 hours a day. A few did special work for which they might have been previously trained, but most of them worked in a textile factory attached to the jail. A great part of the jail was converted into a spinning and weaving factory, and the machines were working away at full pressure. Inside this factory there was hardly any evidence of the jail, except the presence of one unarmed warden at the entrance to each hall, who kept the door locked.

We were told that as far as possible trade union rules applied to the jail workers, hours of work, etc., and apparently the trade union occasionally inspected them for the purpose. The workers were given wages which were between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the trade union rates of wages outside. Two-thirds of these wages were kept in a reserve fund for the prisoner and he was not allowed to touch them. On being discharged this money as well as any other that may lie to his credit was given to him, so that he may have something to start life afresh. One-third of his earnings could be spent by the prisoner in buying anything available in the jail store or even from outside when feasible. We saw this store. It was in charge of a prisoner and contained cigarettes, articles of food and toilet, etc. Books could be purchased. No cash was given to the prisoners but they could sign vouchers in making purchases and the jail office adjusted the accounts. Friends or relatives outside could send money or goods to prisoners.

Prisoners were permitted to smoke at any time and could speak to each other. There was a barber's shop inside the jail fitted up like any cheap barber's shop in a working class quarter of a city. It was run by a prisoner who earned money by his work there. The prisoners visiting him paid him out of their own earnings. We watched a prisoner being shaved and at the end an Eau-de-Cologne spray was given.

We asked if there were any political prisoners. We were taken to two. One of them told us that he had been sentenced to ten years for

spying in Russia on behalf of Czechoslovakia. He was a well educated man and a good musician. Hence he had been made the director of music in the jail. When we entered his cell he was actually writing the musical score of a piece. He had a wireless set in his cell which he had fitted up himself out of his earnings.

The second political prisoner we were taken to was a Russian who had been sentenced for a very grave offence. He had been an aviator in the Red Army and during the civil wars when numerous attempts were made by old Russian generals, with the assistance of the allied governments, to break the Soviet power, he deserted the Red Army and flew over with his aeroplane to the enemy. He was later captured and sentenced to death, the sentence being subsequently commuted to 10 years. He had already served 3 to 4 years and he was hoping to get off in another 3 or 4 years. He had been put in charge of the electric fittings of the jail. He also had a radio set in his cell and a number of books.

As we were very much pressed for time we were unable to see as much of the jail as we wanted to. We had an impression that we had been shown the brighter side of jail life. Nonetheless two facts stood out. One was that we had actually seen desirable and radical improvements over the old system prevailing even now in most countries; and the second and even more important fact was the mentality of the prison officials, and presumably the higher officials of the government also, in regard to jails. Actual conditions may or may not be good but the general principles laid down for jails are certainly far in advance of anything we had known elsewhere in practice. Anyone with a knowledge of prisons in India and of the barbarous way in which handcuffs, fetters and other punishments are used will appreciate the difference. The governor of the prison in Moscow who took us round was all the time laying stress on the human side of jail life, and how it was their endeavour to keep this in the front and not to make the prisoner feel in any way dehumanised or outcasted. I wish we in India would remember this wholesome principle and practise it in our daily lives even outside jail.

The prison we saw was a central jail for serious offenders — those who had committed murder, high treason, etc. The usual sentence was the maximum, which, apart from the death sentence, is ten years. In other jails, where lesser offenders are sent, we were told that conditions were even more agreeable and considerable freedom was allowed to prisoners. They are even permitted to go home for a few days on parol. In the case of peasants this leave is usually given during harvest time so that they can utilise it to the best advantage.

Miss Freda Utley has contributed an interesting article to the March number of the *Socialist Review*, describing a visit to a Bolshevik prison in Georgia. It was in Tiflis. She tells us how humanely the prisoners were treated and how they were all being educated. The Russians are trying to put into practice what psychologists have discussed for years past, and their prison system, instead of brutalising offenders, tends to change them into good citizens. Crime is regarded as the result of bad environment, and lack of education and understanding. Criminals are therefore treated as "victims of economic circumstances or as sick and ignorant people who have to be taken into an institution to be trained to live in society."

If this account is correct, and if what we saw ourselves truly represents the state of prisons in the Russian Union, it can be said without a shadow of doubt that to be in a Russian prison is far preferable than to be a worker in an Indian factory, whose lot is 10 to 11 hours work a day and then to live in a crowded and dark and airless tenement, hardly fit for an animal. The mere fact that there are some prisons like the ones we saw is in itself something for the Soviet Government to be proud of.

In considering this question however we should bear in mind two facts. The Soviet Government has a special and a ruthless way of treating its political opponents and all those whom it may suspect of counter-revolutionary activities. The humane principles of the general criminal law are not supposed to apply to them as they are considered to be the enemies of society. These people have been treated badly and in some cases very cruelly in the past and hence many of the stories of the Red Terror and Bolshevik tyranny. Extreme cases of such treatment may not occur now except when a war scare frightens Moscow, but even now the hand of the Soviet Government lies heavily on all its political opponents. Thus we have the general law of the land applied humanely to the great majority of the population say 95 per cent; and 5 per cent or so being suspected and watched and treated badly. The ordinary worker and peasant is probably very much better off; the relics of Tsarism and some individuals who are too independent for the government are much worse off.

Another consideration to be borne in mind is the paucity of funds at the disposal of the Bolsheviks. They want to spend everything they have on industrial development, on education and agriculture. They have no desire to spend it on erecting large prisons. They say that they hope to abolish most of the prisons by their better organisation of society. Why then waste money on prisons? For the present they carry on with the old Tsarist prisons. In Moscow and in the larger cities

these prisons may be in tolerable condition, but probably in the provinces they are not at all presentable. And the Soviet Government will not spend money on improving them. Hence probably the accounts of bad conditions in some of these jails.

But the ideal of a better social order and a humane criminal law, which inspires the Soviet functionary in a prison or outside, is something far more important than bricks and mortar and a better jail building. If that ideal endures Russia will make good despite all difficulties.

## 12. The Problem of Minorities<sup>1</sup>

Many of us are apt to imagine that India is particularly unfortunate in having to face a complicated problem of minorities and different communities. As a matter of fact many other countries have faced and solved this problem. Russia specially is a country with numerous national minorities with different languages and cultures, and it is interesting and instructive for us to study the methods of the Bolsheviks in regard to these minorities.

In Tsarist Russia there were about 140 different nationalities who did not speak Russian. There were twenty nationalities of one million each: the Turco-Tartars numbered 20 millions, the Ukrainians 25 to 30 millions, the Poles 8 millions, and the Jews 7 millions. The non-Russian speaking nationalities were 57 per cent of the total population.

The old policy, under the Tsar, was to pitch one nationality against the other. Attempts were made to Russianise aliens by bringing them into the Russian church. Any person, belonging to these minority groups, who aspired to become a professor had to change his religion and enter the orthodox church. The teaching of minority languages was not encouraged and sometimes was actively repressed. In 1831 under a decree of the Tsar all Polish schools were closed; only the religious schools of the Jews and Moslems were permitted to continue. Thus these minority communities became very backward.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 10 May 1928.

Soon after the October Revolution in 1917 the 2nd All Russia Congress of Soviets made the following declarations:—

- (1) Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
- (2) Right of self-determination, even to separation and formation of an independent state.
- (3) Abolition of all and every kind of national, racial and religious privileges.
- (4) Free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups.

The Russian Union — the U.S.S.R. — is a federation of six constituent republics. Some of these republics are themselves federations and have besides many autonomous areas. Thus each considerable minority inhabiting a particular area has a great deal of autonomy and can develop its own language and culture. It is the policy of the Central Government not only to leave these republics and autonomous areas to work along their own lines but to help them actively to develop their resources and cultures. Schools conducted in the local languages are opened; an attempt is made to carry on public activities, work in the Soviets, etc., in the language of the area; and newspapers are published in these languages.

A distinction is made between the political rights and the cultural rights of a minority group. So far as the former are concerned they have the same rights as any other minority community or as the majority. They are not specially protected or given any weightage or separate representation, except in so far as a whole area may be made into an autonomous area. In cultural matters, however, much more freedom is given to them and their rights are specially protected. The Central Government feels that so long as there are backward communities in the Union the progress of the whole Union will be retarded, and hence the stress on levelling up of these groups.

In 1926-27 the primary schools, specially meant for different national groups, in one of the constituent republics — the R.S.F.S.R. alone (but including northern Caucasus) — amounted to:

for Turkish nationality	...	1,197
„ Ugro-Finns	...	1,810
„ People with western culture	...	1,272
„ Mongols and Manchurians	...	233
„ North Caucasus	...	788
„ People of the North	...	36

The school books are prepared in the different languages. Indeed primary instruction is given now in 62 different languages in the Union,

and books and papers are issued in 52 languages. In August 1927 the newspapers of the national minorities in the Soviet Union numbered 201, with a total circulation of 9,28,580 copies.

Prior to the revolution many nationalities had no regular written language, e.g., the Mordva, Clmyks, Oirats, and the South Siberian peoples. The Soviet Government had new scripts prepared for 16 such groups, and it reformed many other scripts and made them simpler and more scientific.

Attempts have been made in the eastern republics to follow up the building of schools conducted in the native language by introducing this language in the local soviets and public institutions. This is specially succeeding in Tartaristan. In the village soviets of Tartaristan the Tartar language has been adopted at the following rate:

1922	1923	1924	1925
20	50	80	85

The town soviets have made similar progress.

During the last two or three years special steps have been taken to prepare teachers for higher education in the non-Russian languages. For this purpose 28 linguistic departments were opened, up to last year, in the higher schools. These departments will give a regular supply of graduates after a few years.

The Commissariat of Education also sets aside a number of places to train young people in languages, customs of nationalities, etc. The numbers of these during the last few years were:—

In 1923	...	991
" 1924	...	1,034
" 1925	...	1,777
" 1926	...	1,283

Of these 236 men were Turco-Tartars.

Women in some of these eastern republics are making great progress. In Uzbekistan before the revolution women were mostly *purdanashins*, seldom literate, and in a state of half slavery. Now in this republic of Central Asia there are 276 women's educational institutions with 13,200 students. Of all the students of the national minorities 20 per cent last year were women. They are specially attracted to educational work and also to medicine.

It is difficult to draw any final conclusions about anything Russian at this stage, but it would certainly appear from the progress made in the last five years that the problem of minorities has been largely solved there. This does not mean that complete equality has been established and there are no evils left. Rykoff, the Prime Minister of the Russian

Union, stated last year that although much progress had been made, much still remained. They had not succeeded in uprooting serfdom, ignorance and superstition. By decree they had established the complete equality of all nationalities in the Union, but in practice this was not fully done. Full equality could only come with the removal of economic and cultural differences. Nor could women be free till they attained economic freedom also.

Rykoff is certainly right in drawing attention to all that has not been done. But the successes already achieved are great enough and show that properly tackled the problem of minorities can be solved with rapidity and ease. The hundred and fifty years of British rule in India compare very badly in this respect with this effort. But may we whisper it? The British do not want the problem to be solved.

### 13. Education<sup>1</sup>

The new Russia is a fascinating study from many points of view. But to an Indian the most interesting and instructive aspect of her new policy is probably her attitude to education and specially her gallant fight against illiteracy. Enormous agricultural areas with an almost illiterate peasantry offer problems for solution which are not dissimilar to ours. An eminent educationist of America, Dr. Lucy L. W. Wilson, has written a little book on the *New Schools of New Russia*<sup>2</sup> which gives us some idea of how the Soviet government is trying to solve these problems. This book is one of the excellent studies of Soviet Russia which the Vanguard Press of New York are publishing.

The first impression that one gathers from this study, and from all accounts of Russia, is of the enormous importance that is attached to the education of youth by the Bolshevik leaders and rank and file. All the world over there is a realisation that only through right education can a better order of society be built up. In Russia the leaders today have no doubt as to what this future order should be and afire with their ideals they have set themselves out to realise it in their own time.

1. First published as articles in *Young India*, 9, 16 and 23 August 1928.  
 2. Published in 1928.

They have concentrated their great energy on the training of the youth of the country, and their ablest men and women have been charged with this task. Within a few days of the October revolution with civil war raging in the heart of Petrograd and every one predicting the speedy collapse of the Bolsheviks, they had time to announce their educational programme. Later, with amazing audacity, they proclaimed that they would put an end to illiteracy in the whole country within ten years. It was not merely a pious wish. They laid down a definite programme not only for the education of the youth but to "liquidate illiteracy," as they called it, in the adult population.

They failed in their endeavour. The fates were against them. Civil war continued, and the wars of the intervention, and famine and blockade ravaged the country and reduced it to a pitiful condition. But although they failed to liquidate illiteracy they have shown remarkable results within these ten years.

A second outstanding feature of Russian education is the relation which exists between the school and the everyday world. Education is not something in the air, cut off from the daily life of the student or from his future work as a citizen. Real education, it is felt, must be based on the actual environment and experiences of the child and it must fit him for the work he will have to do in after-life. In order therefore to plan an intelligent curriculum, one of the leading educationists made a thorough study of an industrial region and an agricultural region. It is being continually pressed on all teachers that they must keep in intimate touch with the life conditions of their pupils so as to be able to adapt their curriculum to them.

This necessitates that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue. The Soviet Union has a far greater diversity of peoples and languages than India has, but in spite of the difficulties involved, this principle has been rigidly adhered to. For every different language group in the Union the schools use the particular language of that group. Sometimes in the same city the language of instruction in different schools is different. Efforts are made to develop in every way the local languages. The soviets in different areas are encouraged to carry on their work in the language of the region. Official newspapers and books are published in those languages and special institutes have been opened in Leningrad and Moscow and elsewhere to train teachers in the various languages. There are at present 45 such institutes. The big universities have special faculties for national minorities. This desire to encourage the culture of the minorities has been carried so far that where there were only spoken dialects and no written languages, new scripts have been evolved. When we visited the Education Department at Moscow we were shown many school books in a variety of scripts, some

resembling the Persian script, others entirely unknown to us.

An extreme example may perhaps convey some idea of the length to which the Soviet government is carrying this policy. There is a small tribe in the Irkutsk region of Siberia. It is called the Karagass tribe and in all it numbers 405, including infants. They speak a variant of the Turkish language and are a nomad people living chiefly by hunting. Even for the children of those people a special school was opened. It is attended in winter only as the pupils accompany their parents in their summer wanderings. Another nomad people, the Gypsies, have three schools and an attempt is being made to produce a "Gypsy Speller". This has not been easy as there is no Gypsy alphabet.

The names of some of the other national minorities in the Soviet Union might be of interest. They are the Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians, Germans, Finns, Hebrews, Armenians, White Russians, Samoyeds, Ostiaks, Mongolians, Yakuts, Tartars, Bashkirs, Tungas, Buryats, Yukagirs, Kamtchadols, Esquimos, Kirghiz, Hakassians, Oirats, Tchuvash, Komi, Mari, Kalmuck, Ingush, Mordvans, Assyrians in Northern Caucasus, and Koreans. This is not meant to be a complete list.

As this article is written the newspapers announce that the Leningrad Academy of Science<sup>3</sup> has founded an institute<sup>4</sup> for the study of Buddhist culture. The institute is compiling an Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, and an international Congress for the study of Buddhist culture is going to be convened.

It is interesting to note that in many of the outlying republics of the Russian Union, for instance amongst the Tartars and Bashkirs, women who till lately were in *purdah*, are being trained as teachers.

A third feature of Soviet education, which necessarily follows from the principle of communism, is its organisation for the masses. In most countries the better type of education is a monopoly of the well-to-do in private schools. In Russia an attempt is made to give this education to all. And it is based on the principle that education must be collective or co-operative, that is, the goal is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and individual skill but the ability to give to others and to take from them. Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin and a leading educationist, has stated in this connection that, "The collective principle is both the point of departure and the final aim of every educational process. This principle runs through it like a red thread. Except through the collective organisation of the children there is no social education.... This principle is its base, its essence and its content."

3. The academy of Sciences of U.S.S.R. was located at Leningrad till 1934, when it was moved to Moscow.

4. The Oriental Section of the Leningrad Academy of Sciences.

Education in the days of the Tsar was largely in the hands of the orthodox church. Its purpose was to teach loyalty to the Tsar and the Church and, as in India, to provide clerks for government offices. The 'lower classes' were not encouraged to rise above their station. A Tsarist minister of education laid it down that, "the children of coachmen, servants, cooks, laundresses and such like people should not be encouraged to rise above the sphere to which they were born." Children were taught the following catechism :

Question : What does religion teach us as our duty to the Tsar ?

Answer : Worship, fidelity, payment of taxes, service, love and prayer; the whole being comprised in the words worship and fidelity.

The first decrees of the Soviet department of education provided for the separation of the school from the church, co-education, and the encouragement of non-Russian nationalities to organise schools in their own languages. It was further laid down that a pre-school education for children from three to seven years, elementary education from eight to twelve years and secondary education from thirteen to sixteen were all free, obligatory and universal; and in addition it was proclaimed that every Russian citizen was entitled to higher education. It is presumed that the social education of all children up to fifteen or sixteen is the affair of the state and not of the family. The aim of this education has been stated to be : "To promote the all-round development of an individual who shall be healthy, strong, active, courageous, independent in thought and action, with a many-sided culture; an efficient person striving for the interest of the working class, which is ultimately for the interest of the whole of humanity."

Education therefore begins at the age of three. Before that the child, and indeed the pregnant mother, is the responsibility of the department of health. Pregnant women workers are released from all work, with full wages, three or four months before and after child birth and are entitled to receive free medical aid. The mother is further given sufficient time daily during work-hours to nurse her baby, who is kept in creches attached to the place of work.

Every factory and trade union contributes to a culture fund which finances creches, nursery schools, kindergartens and children's playgrounds. In the pre-schools special attention is paid to hygiene, food and sleep, and the curriculum includes play, stories, excursions, music, art and drama. An attempt is made even at this early age to encourage co-operative habits in the children. In the last few years about 10,000 of these pre-schools have been started, but of course they can only serve a small proportion of the population.

The Trade Unions also contribute 10 per cent of their income to adult education, and in their collective agreements with employers there is a special clause which requires the latter to pay 1 per cent of the total wages bill to this fund.

Elementary and secondary education is conceived of as a whole, the school being called the Unified Labour School and divided into a first grade (elementary) and second grade (secondary). The full course varies from seven to nine years. There are certain special features of this school. There are no examinations for admission, and promotion takes place on the quality of the year's work, which is judged by the collective work of the group of which the student is a part. In all schools there is co-education. There are periodical medical examinations of the children and individual attention is paid to the child's capacity. Thus, weak children are exempted from heavy work; those with poor eyesight are put in the first row. The Dalton plan has been largely adopted and this involves the giving up of lecturing as a method of instruction.

Student government in schools is encouraged greatly and there are many students' organisations: Octobrists<sup>5</sup>, Pioneers, Comsomol, Children's co-operatives. Students have a considerable share in drawing up the school programmes. Communists of course firmly believe in a class war but so far as schools are concerned Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, has stated that "student self-government cannot be a copy of the forms of the political life of adults, for in the life of children, neither class struggle nor class domination can take place. The school is rather an embryo and a symbol of the future society without classes." But in spite of this praiseworthy ideal there is probably a good deal of friction and antagonism even in the school.

The excursion method is very largely used in the schools. One of the reasons why this has become so important a method was the paucity of equipment and books in the early years. Students are being continually taken in groups to museums, historical places, art galleries and to study nature. Sometimes longer excursions are organised to distant places and if funds are not sufficient the group tries to earn money *en route*.

Another important method of education is what is called the complex or project. The complex is a centre of interest round which are grouped all the associated ideas. For instance the village complex would deal with village life; crops and harvests and agricultural produce; village hygiene and social life; local trade; the inter-relation between village and town; the defects of rural life, their causes and cures; the government of

5. A Russian child is a member of the Octobrists from the ages of 8 to 10, a Pioneer from 10 to 14 and a Komsomol after that.

the village; and the necessity for co-operation of all public workers to improve the village. In working out this complex the students are encouraged to work in the villages and put their theories into practice.

The health complex deals in some detail with the health of the individual, of the home and of the community, and tries to impress upon the student that the two former depend on the health of the community. The functions of the body, food, digestion, etc., are dealt with and the harmful effects of alcohol are demonstrated.

In this way many other subjects are treated as complexes — nature-work, children's life, human relations and finally community life. The object aimed at is to produce a desire to serve the community as a whole and to apply the knowledge gained not only for personal but for public welfare.

Very detailed programmes for these complexes are issued for the teacher, but it is made clear that these are for his general guidance only, and he must develop his own programme in co-operation with the other teachers and the children themselves. It is pointed out that artificial tendencies and mere moralizing are to be avoided. Students are made to think for themselves and to draw their own conclusions.

Schools are influenced considerably by the neighbourhood in which they are situated, for this neighbourhood serves as a practical laboratory. In rural areas village conditions dominate. If situated near a particular factory that factory will influence the teaching of many subjects — geography, science, and mathematics.

Education has been made universal in the urban areas but in rural areas much remains to be done. It is interesting to find, however, that the peasantry are beginning to take a live interest in the spread of education, and in some places have constructed schools with their own hands. Another interesting fact is that according to scientific tests it has been found that the average peasant child ranks higher in intelligence than the town child. This is probably due to their closer contact with nature and the school curriculum helps this natural development.

In some parts of Russia the land is not rich enough to support the peasants and an additional occupation is necessary. Weaving with handlooms is prevalent and the family loom is continually being worked by some member of the family, including the children.

The growth of rural education may be partly judged by the fact that in 1913 there were only 2,800 rural letter boxes. In 1926 there were 64,000 such boxes besides travelling post offices for the outlying villages. The drivers of these moving post offices distribute agricultural goods. A *Peasants' Gazette* started in 1923 has attained a circulation of a million copies and deals with all matters relating to the peasantry. Hundreds of thousands of letters are received by it containing enquiries, com-

plaints of officials etc., and these are investigated and whenever necessary action taken on them.

The soviets have used cinematograph films a great deal for educational purposes. One of their most famous artist-producers has recently produced a film called "Village Policy." This deals with all phases of agriculture and peasant life and specially with the actual problems and difficulties of the peasant. An attempt is made to rouse the audience to face the problem and to appreciate the solution.

The Revolution was primarily the work of the town workers and the peasantry only gradually drifted into it. For long the antagonism between town and village was very evident and it was largely owing to pressure from the peasants that Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy which was a departure from the pure milk of communism. The conflict between the two ideals still continues and is an important feature of domestic policy in Russia. Those in authority are very desirous of bringing about full understanding and co-operation between the town and the village and Lenin invented a special word for this purpose, which means "dovetailing." A workers' society for the Union of City and Village was started in 1923 and it now has several million members with branches all over the country. Factory groups and workers' clubs also develop special contacts with particular rural areas and help them in improving village conditions.

The fight against illiteracy was carried on in a variety of ways. Trade unions, workers' clubs, peasant institutes, co-operatives, prisons were all used as educational centres. Special schools for adults, agricultural and industrial, and both daily and for Sunday only, were started. An extraordinary commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy was established and a voluntary society — "The Down with Illiteracy Society" — with a large membership was formed. The object aimed at is not merely to teach the three R's, but to impart social knowledge and to rouse a desire to co-operate in the building up of the State. The number of libraries is increasing rapidly and each one of them has one or more study circles. There are also travelling libraries. Cheap booklets dealing with the daily problems of the peasant and the worker are issued by the million.

All this has resulted in practically abolishing illiteracy in the urban areas and amongst the industrial workers. But the peasantry is still largely unaffected. They have been approached, apart from other methods, through the Red Army, which consists largely of peasants. For the two years during which the peasant serves in the army he is made to go through an educational course, and a little before his discharge a special course prepares him to do educational and cultural work in his

village. Large numbers of people are going through the army and returning to their village homes with some training to help in the improvement of village conditions and in the fight against illiteracy.

There are many number of special schools and institutes — research institutes, technical schools, technical short courses, workers' faculties, peasant schools, schools for defectives (deaf, blind, etc.), art and music schools. One of the most important training institutions is the Institute of Psychology and Defectology. The most eminent psychologists, physicians and educationists work in this institution for child study.

For higher studies there are about a score of universities besides two special communist universities in Moscow. The two latter are the Oriental University<sup>6</sup> and the Sun Yat Sen University<sup>7</sup>. They are specially meant for teaching the communist doctrines and methods of propaganda.

There was a tendency soon after the revolution to run down everything appertaining to the old regime. Even famous Russian classical authors were called bourgeois contemptuously and were not encouraged. Religion of course was a special target. Gradually these tendencies have softened and there is more tolerance. There is no active anti-religious propaganda in the schools although the whole background of education is non-religious. The letter sent by Maxim Gorky to Romain Rolland, which was recently published in the newspapers, showed that Russian authors of Tsarist days are widely read and appreciated. The Russian, even though he may be a communist, is too much of an artist not to appreciate good literature and art and music wherever they may be found.

Lenin himself was very much attached to some famous Russian classics and used to be affected powerfully by good music.

There is a story told of Lunacharsky, the present Commissar of Education, which gives us an insight into his character. During the early days of the Revolution when civil war was waging, news came that a part of the Kremlin in Moscow<sup>1</sup> was destroyed. The news turned out later to be untrue but for the moment Lunacharsky was greatly affected. With tears in his eyes he rushed up to Lenin and handed in his resignation. He could not stand, he said, the destruction of the beautiful structures created in the past. He was prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation but only after the custody of Russian art was placed in his hands. Lunacharsky, as head of the department of education, now controls libraries, museums, artistic and scientific institutions, the theatres,

6. An Institute of Oriental Studies was established in Moscow in the autumn of 1920.

7. The Sun Yat Sen University of Toilers of the East was established in Moscow in 1925.

music, the cinematograph — practically the whole of the cultural side of Russia. A poet and a dramatist and a lover of the humanities and yet a revolutionary and a communist, he has given to the Russian educational system the wide cultural outlook which it possesses.

Another leader to whom Russian education owes much is Krupskaya, the life-partner of Lenin in his long years of tribulation and in his triumph. Even during the years of exile she specialised in education and wrote a book on *Public Education and Democracy*. She dresses very plainly and her features are heavy and somewhat unattractive, but even a few minutes' conversation with her discloses her charm. Characteristic of her were some words she addressed to the Congress of Soviets after Lenin's death : "Comrades, men and women workers, men and women peasants : I have a great favour to ask from you. Do not pay external respect to Lenin's personality. Do not build statues in his memory. He cared for none of these things in his life. Remember there is much poverty and ruin in this country. If you want to honour the name of Lenin, build children's homes, kindergartens, schools, libraries, ambulatories, hospitals, homes for cripples and other defectives."

#### 14. The Peasant and the Land

Moscow looms large in the Soviet Union. It dominates Russia and casts its shadow on the other countries of the world. But Moscow and Leningrad and the other towns are but a few islands in a sea of villages. For Russia, like India, is essentially rural and agricultural. Eighty per cent of her population lives in villages, and seventy-five per cent of her working population is engaged in the cultivation of the soil.

Tremendous efforts have been made to industrialise the country but for long years Russia is bound to be mainly agricultural. To understand her therefore one must go to the villages and see the peasant at his work. And to measure the gains and losses of the Soviet regime one must see the difference it has made to the peasants.

But the very vastness of the country makes the enquiry very difficult. Conditions vary and what is true of the villages near Moscow may be utterly false for more distant villages. There was indeed a report a year

or two ago that a party of explorers in the Siberian forests had suddenly come across a settlement of 1,500 persons entirely cut off from the rest of the world. They had not heard of the Great War; they did not know of the Russian Revolution. They thought that the Tsar was still ruling them. The report is hardly credible although it appeared in a Leningrad newspaper. But whether it is fanciful or merely exaggerated it gives us some idea of the diversity of conditions in the Soviet Union.

It is well-known that serfdom existed in Russia till not long ago. The last of the edicts liberating the serfs was issued in 1863. At that date out of a total population of sixty millions nearly fifty millions were serfs of various kinds, either on state lands or on the lands of the royal family or with private landowners. During the period of serfdom the proprietor had almost complete legal power to make his serfs do what he liked and to punish them with lashes and blows. He could also send a disobedient serf to Siberia.

Emancipation did not bring great relief to the serfs. They usually had little land and it was not good and the village was burdened with the price of the land or the rent of it which had to be paid to the old landlord. The state helped outright purchases by means of loans but the burden continued. The people who benefited most by the new arrangement were the landlords who got hard cash and freedom from all worry.

Soon after, the revolutionary movement was carried to the villages but it met with poor response there. The peasant in Russia, as in India, did not appreciate or understand vague ideas of freedom. What he wanted was land and lighter taxes and protection from oppression. We find in the stories of some famous Russian novelists descriptions of this period and how young revolutionaries were suspected by the peasantry and sometimes even handed over to the police.

After the Russo-Japanese war<sup>1</sup> the peasants arose in many places, and riots and disorders spread. They were put down, but not entirely, and the peasantry organised a Peasants' Union<sup>2</sup> with the cry "all the land for those who labour on it."

The peasantry were helped in organising themselves by the existence of ancient village councils called *mirs*. These were *panchayats*, on a highly democratic basis, often meeting in the open and discussing the local affairs of the village. They owned some times some common land which used to be divided up by them. There were also more formal and official local bodies called the "zemstvos" which came into existence

1. 1904-05.

2. A Peasants' Union was formed in the summer of 1905. This Union joined the Union of Unions and staged the successful general strike of October 1905.

after the emancipation. The franchise for these was based on property and they were thus usually controlled by the landlords. They may be compared in their functions and activities to the present District Boards in India.

The war hit the peasantry the hardest. The army absorbed their best men and it is said that seven millions of them died or were maimed. Fields remained unclutivated and where man had fought for long years against the forest and had gradually driven it back, the forest advanced again triumphantly and undid the work of generations. Strange forces began to move the great masses and the cry arose, ever more insistent, of "peace and land" — to which the town people added "bread."

The peasants held aloof from the Bolsheviks during the early days of the revolution. But without the help of the peasantry Bolshevism was doomed to defeat. Ultimately Lenin won over the Peasants' Congress<sup>3</sup>. But even before this the peasants had taken the law into their own hands and had expropriated the landlords themselves and taken possession of the land.

The civil war that followed, with its bands of adventurers attacking the Soviet Government with foreign money and munitions, was a time of sore trial for the peasantry. Fearful of losing again their land, which they had acquired after so much toil and suffering, they rallied to the Soviet Government and it was largely with their help that the Soviet triumphed. But the war was followed by famine and disease and it was on this scene of horror and destruction that the work of reconstruction had to begin.

The earliest decrees of the Soviet Government deal with the nationalisation of land. Land could not be "bought, sold, rented, given as security, or expropriated by any means whatever." "The right to enjoy the land is accorded, without distinction of sex, to all citizens of the State who wish to work the land, either with their own families or in other forms of association, and only as long as they are capable of working. Hiring of labour is prohibited." The peasant thus got the land and was freed from the debt on the land and from yearly rents to landlords. Some of the big estates were taken over by the State and made into model farms. Distribution of land amongst the peasantry was left to the village communes.

The old practice of communes holding land made nationalisation easier than it otherwise would have been. This however often meant

3. The programme of the Socialist Revolutionaries (the peasant party) included the abolition of private property in land and the distribution of the large estates by elected village communities. This programme was reaffirmed at the All-Russian Soviet Peasants' Deputies in September 1917 and Lenin at once promised that the Bolsheviks would implement it if they came to power.

that the farmer lived far from the land and so the farmer had to migrate to his fields during the working season. The women-folk help in the fields in summer. In winter they keep busy by spinning, knitting and sewing.

The early decrees totally prevented the transference of the right to use land. But in spite of this all manner of illegal renting grew up. In 1922 the law was changed and renting for a fixed small period was permitted. Hiring of labour continued to be forbidden. Even this did not bring sufficient relief as large numbers of families had no horses or other animals to do the work. So a further change was made in 1926. The period for renting was increased and hiring labour on such rented land was permitted, subject to certain conditions. All rental contracts must be registered with the local authorities, and the working members of the family of the renter must work on the land, though they may hire labour to assist them. Hired labourers must be treated as regards food and lodging as members of the family. There are a number of other conditions regulating the renting of land and the hiring of labour.

The peasant pays one tax to the State — the agricultural tax. This is so arranged that the richer peasant pays not only more proportionately but the rate is an increasing one. On the other hand a large number of the poor peasants are wholly exempt from taxation on the ground that their income is too little and their standard of life too low to permit of further deterioration by taxation. They thus hold the land without paying anything for it. Till last year this exemption applied to twenty-five per cent of peasant farms. On the tenth anniversary of the Revolution, the Government announced that they proposed to extend this exemption to a further ten per cent. In addition a proposal was made to give state pensions to aged people among the poorer peasants.

Russia is very poor and there is nothing it wants so much as money for education, agricultural development and industrial expansion. It is curious therefore that in spite of this demand for money tax exemptions should be increased. The Communist Party Congress of 1926 stated that they refused to regard the peasant merely as an object of taxation. Excessive taxes and the increasing of retail prices would inevitably stop the progress of the productive power of the village and diminish the commodities of agriculture.

The average tax per peasant household in 1924-25 was 14.2 roubles; in 1925-26 it was 9.3 roubles and in 1926-27 it was 11.9 roubles (£1=10 roubles). The tax is based on the area of arable land, varied by the number of members of the family. Livestock is treated as parts of an acre for purposes of taxation. The tax is a steeply graded one. Thus for incomes up to 155 roubles it is 4.75 per cent; to 200 roubles, 5.25

per cent; to 300 roubles, 5.75 per cent; to 400 roubles, 8 per cent; to 600 roubles, 10.5 per cent; and over 600 roubles, 14 per cent.

A considerable part of the agricultural tax is spent on local needs. In 1925-26 the tax yielded 235 million roubles. Out of this roughly 100 million roubles were spent locally. The tax is thus meant to cover both local and national budgets. It is interesting to find however that many villages all over the country raise voluntary taxes for their own needs. This voluntary tax sometimes is as high as 35 per cent of the agricultural tax and in one instance was reported to be 70 per cent of it.

Soon after the Revolution large numbers of communes sprang up. Groups of workers organised themselves into little communities to work on the land together and live a common life. Many religious groups did likewise. But in spite of its great initial success the movement dwindled, chiefly on account of friction on matters of detail. It was replaced gradually by the *artel* which was an association of peasants who pooled their resources and cultivated a common plot of land. Later came other forms of co-operative use of land known as "collectives."

The great advantage of these collective forms of cultivation is the use of machinery, tractors and the like, which are utterly out of the reach of the individual peasant. The tractor is almost a god in Russia today and it is the tractor that has led people to large-scale co-operation on the land.

Agricultural banks and credit societies have been extensively organised and there are many facilities for obtaining credit. There were in 1926 over four million two hundred thousand members of these societies. Help is given by the State through these societies in the form of loans of money for capital, or loans of seeds, or by deferring payments on machinery. Co-operative societies of other kinds, consumers and agricultural, have also spread remarkably.

The Soviet Government is making every effort to induce families to migrate from the overcrowded areas to other parts of the country. Facilities in land and railway fares and loans and temporary exemption from taxation are offered to those who migrate.

Cottage industries used to flourish in Russia and several million men and women were engaged in them. The number decreased greatly during and after the war but they are again increasing. They are being encouraged in every way and such taxes as were a hindrance to them have been removed. This home industry is specially useful in the winter months when there is little else to be done. Clothing, boots, tinware, wooden goods and many other things, are thus made by hand or by simple machinery.

I have referred elsewhere in the course of these articles to the Peasants' Houses or Institutes and to the many other activities of the peasantry.

They have their newspapers and country fairs and academies and sanatoria; their libraries and reading rooms and women's clubs. The Society for the Liquidation of Illiteracy and Mutual Aid Societies are to be found everywhere. And so are the youth organisations — the Pioneers and the Komsomols.

Great changes have taken place in the economy of the village in Russia and the church has lost its pre-eminent position. But still it continues to be a centre of activities and the church holidays are celebrated with feasting and festivity. Civil marriage may be easy but many still crowd the church during the wedding season.

Gradually however the church is being ousted from pride of place by the "Narodni Dam", the Peoples House or *Panchayat Ghar*. This usually houses the library and reading room and club and class-rooms and theatre. And inevitably there is the Lenin corner, draped in red.

### 15. Women and Marriage

"Have they really nationalised women in Russia?" That is, almost invariably, the first question that is asked about Russia. It is not easy to understand what nationalisation of women means. Probably the newspaper correspondents and editors who have taken such pains to spread this particular item of "news" do not themselves know what they write about. At the back of their minds, perhaps, there is an idea of promiscuous sexual intercourse going on all over the Soviet Union. And they must imagine or wish others to imagine that the status of woman has been terribly degraded and she has become a mere chattel for the fulfilment of man's passions.

This is very far from the impression that a visitor to Russia, or even one who reads about her present condition, carries away with him. Whatever other failings the Russian woman of today may have, she is certainly not a chattel or plaything of man. She is independent, aggressively so, and refuses to play second fiddle to man.

I was present for a while at a women's conference in Moscow. Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin, was there, and Madame Sun Yat Sen and

the aged Clara Zetkin<sup>4</sup>, and a large number of women from foreign countries. And all the women from the other countries of Europe who spoke, envied their Russian sisters for the social and economic freedom they had won.

The lot of the woman in Russia in old times was certainly not one of equality with man. The law favoured men. The wife was obliged to do what her husband told her. She could not enter any service without her husband's consent. It was almost impossible for her to get a divorce. The daughter could inherit only one-fourteenth part of the inheritance, the remaining thirteen parts going to the son or sons. After marriage the woman's property and money was under her husband's control. In the villages there was abysmal ignorance and it is said, and supported by many homely Russian sayings, that one of the principal pastimes of the peasant was to beat his wife.

The great war and the civil war that followed broke up many families in Russia. The Soviet Government had thus to deal with continually changing conditions. In their early days they legislated for women workers and marriage and in theory at least made woman the equal of man. But much of the legislation remained on paper although it had a powerful effect on changing the mentality of the masses. Lenin, speaking two years after the revolution, said : "A complete revolution in the legislation affecting women was brought about by the Government of the workers in the first months of its existence. The Soviet Government has not left a stone unturned of these laws which held women in complete subjection. We may now say with pride and without any exaggeration that outside of Soviet Russia there is not a country in the world where women have been given full equal rights, where women are not in a humiliating position which is felt specially in every-day family life. This was one of our first and most important tasks. Certainly laws are not enough and we will not for a minute be satisfied just with decrees. The legal position of women in Soviet Russia is ideal from the point of view of the foremost countries. But we tell ourselves plainly that this is only the beginning."

The general labour legislation was particularly beneficial to women workers and in addition there were special laws for the protection of women. Among the general regulations may be mentioned the eight hour day, which it is now proposed to reduce to seven hours, yearly holidays, social insurance, pensions for long service, rest homes, sanatorium treatment, prohibition of child labour under fourteen, only four hours

1. (1857-1933); one of the founders of the German Communist Party (1919) and a Communist member of the Reichstag 1919-32. Her *Reminiscences of Lenin* was translated in 1929.

work as training from fourteen to sixteen, and six hours from sixteen to eighteen. It must also be remembered that workers' committees in factories and trade unions have considerable authority in regard to workers' conditions. The special laws for the protection of women and motherhood are :

- (i) Employment of women and young persons under 18 in heavy and dangerous industries is prohibited, such as the chemical industry, and others where workers are exposed to lead dust.
- (ii) Four months' maternity vacation is given to industrial workers, and to non-industrial workers whose work involves special strain. Other non-industrial workers get three months' vacation.
- (iii) Night work and overtime for pregnant women is prohibited.
- (iv) A pregnant woman cannot be sent away from the place of her regular work without her consent.
- (v) Nursing mothers are allowed, in addition to the usual intervals, further intervals of not less than half an hour at least every three and a half hours. These intervals are included in working hours and paid for.

It was feared that owing to the privileges given to pregnant women the employer might infringe agreements without proper cause. There is therefore a provision in the law which forbids the discharge of a pregnant woman without the sanction of the labour inspector.

There are also what are called 'night sanatoria' for workers who are not ill enough to leave off work but require care and dieting. They go there after their work and spend the night and their leisure hours there.

The number of women in industry has been growing, though not so fast as the men, and there was a tendency to employ them in almost all kinds of work. But lately there has been a reaction against this and it has been pointed out that "equal rights for women" does not mean the employment of women in some kinds of labour for which they are physically not fitted.

Women occupy the highest positions in the Soviet Union. It was a Russian, Kollontay<sup>2</sup>, who became the world's first woman ambassador. A hundred thousand women were elected to the village soviets in the R.S.F.S.R., and the Ukraine in 1926; and 169 peasant women were members of the All Union Congress of Soviets. Even in backward

2. A.M. Kollontay (1872-1952); Russian revolutionary, diplomat and novelist became in 1920 People's Commissar for Social welfare. In 1923 she was appointed Minister to Norway—the first woman to hold that rank—and thereafter held various diplomatic posts till 1945.

Siberia there are 8,000 women members of the village soviets, forty-five of them being presidents of their soviets. Women have an equal right to the land. There are a million of them working their own land as heads of their households.

There is a special woman's department of the Communist Party known as the 'Genotdel', which carries on vigorous activity for women's education and rights. The 'Genotdel' publishes several journals and organises lectures on hygiene, baby welfare, co-operation, politics and like subjects. March 8th is celebrated throughout Russia as International Women's day.

The marriage and divorce laws of the Soviet are certainly a great break from old tradition. The problems they had to face were partly similar to those that other countries of Europe and America have to face and were partly the result of the general break-up of family life after the wars and of communist ideology. Other countries like Denmark and Turkey have not dissimilar marriage laws and in the United States of America there is a strong movement for what is called "companionate marriage." Soviet Russia is therefore not different in this respect from many other countries.

But Russia is different in one important respect. Tradition and ancient practice have no value there; indeed there is a tendency to go against them because they are inseparably connected with a form of society which is a symbol of slavery for the Russians of today. What the ideal of marriage in a communist state should be it is difficult to say for the high priests of the doctrine differ. Many of them are strong believers in the family but the family would be different from what it is now.

The first Soviet marriage law made marriage a civil ceremony. Religious ceremonies were not prevented and most people continued to have them, specially in the villages. It is curious to notice, however, that even the civil marriage gradually developed a ritual of its own with red draperies and pledges and speeches. Polygamy was prohibited and it was made a criminal offence to conceal a previous marriage at the time of a second. Divorce was free and easy and subject to mutual consent. No community of property was created by marriage, and husband and wife were mutually responsible for each other's support. Illegitimate children were given the same rights as legitimate ones. The husband and wife were permitted to take the name of either as a common name or to keep their own names. Children, after the age of fourteen, were permitted to decide whether they would take their father's or mother's name and also to decide about their citizenship and religion. The law required the parents to keep their children with them and support them. Adoption was not permitted.

Testamentary disposition of property is only permitted in certain cases and even then only in favour of the legal heirs. Ordinarily the wife and the dependent relatives receive equal portions. If the amount is insufficient to support all having a legal claim, those in greatest need have the first charge on it. The law at first did not permit the wife to inherit more than 10,000 roubles (£1,000), the State getting the rest. Two years ago this was changed and now inheritance is supposed to be unlimited, but the tax on it increases on an ascending scale. For a sum exceeding 5,00,000 roubles the tax is 90 per cent.

Such were the main provisions of the marriage law some years ago. In 1925 however an attempt was made to change it but the attempt did not succeed then and was postponed. For many months afterwards the whole of Russia discussed the proposed changes. Innumerable meetings were held all over the country and newspapers were full of the controversy. Leading communists took opposite sides and discussions were not lacking in frankness or warmth. Generally the peasants were more conservative than the town people.

One of the principal reasons why the changes were proposed was the existence of a large number of couples, estimated at one hundred thousand, who were living together but had not registered themselves. It was proposed to legalise these marriages. This was vigorously opposed as were also certain clauses making the whole household liable to pay maintenance to a wife in case the husband was too poor to pay it. The women's organisations were however in favour of protecting unregistered marriages.

After long debate the new marriage law was adopted in November 1926. It stated that "registration of marriage is established with the aim of facilitating the protection of personal and property rights and the interests of the wife and children. Registration is an indisputable proof of the existence of marriage." Thus registration was not marriage but the proof of it only, and marriage could take place without it though it might be more difficult to prove it then. The same protection was afforded to registered and unregistered unions but in the latter case definite proof was required by the court that an actual state of marriage existed. If there was an unregistered union there could be no remarriage.

The wife's maintenance was made a charge on the husband's household but only to the extent of the husband's share in it. Divorce was made even simpler, one party being permitted to claim it without the consent of the other. It was pointed out that in spite of this easy divorce the average number of divorces every year were eleven for every ten thousand of the population. This is said to be less than the number in many other countries where divorce is not free. It was also

stated that the new law although apparently removing restrictions on unions in effect helped to establish monogamy firmly, by attaching material responsibility to every relation.

Adoption was permitted by the new law. The old law forbidding adoption had not been a success. There were large numbers of young orphans who had no one to look after them and were taken as extra hands by peasants and treated like their own children.

The legal marriage age was at first sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys. But largely at the instance of women, the marriage age for women was also raised to eighteen.

This marriage law applies to the R.S.F.S.R. In the other republics of the Union there are some variations. Thus in White Russia only registered marriages are recognised.

It is difficult to moralise about any matter, as ideas of conventional morality differ from age to age and country to country. And conventional morality has suffered a severe set-back in Russia. There are many who attach little importance to constancy in married life. But there are also many who are called puritans and who wage unceasing war against sexual laxity of any kind. An eminent professor is the leader of this movement and he has laid it down that continence should be the rule and the sexual act should only be indulged in for the purpose of having children. He is greatly against birth control. But control indeed is not favoured by the State, not because they have any moral objections to it, but because they want the population of Russia to increase.

Many of the well-known leaders of the communists — Lenin, Bukharin, Lunacharsky and others — have expressed great concern at the extremist tendencies on both sides — sexual laxity on the one side and an extreme form of puritanism which frowns even at handshaking and laughter and amusement of any kind on the other. The emphasis has been on the side of restraint and they have denounced indulgence of all kinds, sexual, in alcohol and in tobacco.

Lenin discussed these matters in an interview with Clara Zetkin in 1920. He said that his alarm had forced him to speak. "Our future generation disturbs me deeply. They are a part of the revolution. And if the evil manifestations of bourgeois society begin to appear in the revolutionary world — as the widely flowering roots of certain weeds — then it is better to take measures against them in time." Further he said that: "The changed attitude of the young to questions of sex life are of course on grounds of 'principle' and based on theory. Many call their position 'revolutionary' and 'communistic'. They sincerely think it is so. But that does not impress this fellow. Although

I am less than any one a gloomy ascetic, this so-called 'new sex-life' of the young, and often the older ones too, often seems to be entirely bourgeois, just another form of the bourgeois house of prostitution." Referring to the theory that the satisfaction of the sex impulse and the demands of love should be as simple and inconsequential as the drinking of a glass of water, he says: "Certainly thirst must be satisfied. But does a normal person, under normal conditions, lie in the street and drink from mud puddles? Or even from a glass that dozens of other people have been drinking from? But still more important is the social aspect of it. Drinking water is an individual matter. But two participate in love, and from it arises a third, new life. Here the interests of society come in. The duty to the collective must be considered.

"I don't for a minute want to preach asceticism. Communism must bring the joy of life and vigour which comes from the completeness of the love life. The excess in sex-life so often observed at the present time does not, in my opinion, bring with it joy of life and vigour, but on the contrary, lessens them. In time of revolution this is bad, very bad.

"Youth needs healthy sport, swimming, excursions, physical interests — study, investigation, scientific research — a sound body makes a sound mind. We want neither monks nor Don Juans, nor yet the German philistine as the happy medium."

To combat these unhealthy tendencies which troubled Lenin a special effort is being made to carry on propaganda on the dangers of sexual indulgence and venereal disease. The sport and physical culture movement is also being encouraged and has spread very fast. Prostitution is also being combated vigorously. The Communist Party has a rule that any member of the Party having relations with a prostitute shall be expelled from the party.

But more than these devices of lecture and propaganda it is hoped that the new conditions of life will teach restraint and divert attention to other interests of life. Laxity and indulgence flourish in wealthy leisure class which has little to do and takes to sex to escape from *ennui* and boredom. And this leisure class, being the model to be admired and looked up to, sets the fashion to the other classes below. In Russia this class has disappeared and few people have the time to think of much else than their work and their many other occupations.

In Moscow there stands the great Palace of Motherhood on the river bank. It has a fine exhibition of everything that relates to the health of the mother and the child. It carries on research for the fight against disease and mortality, and trains and sends out doctors, midwives and nurses. Beautiful paintings and posters carry its message to the distant

villages and teach the father how to treat the mother, and the mother how to treat the baby, and both how to have a pleasant and clean home and healthy children. They teach the mother specially to feed the baby at her own breasts. A poster represents a little calf looking with reproach in its eyes at a baby drinking milk out of a bottle and asking: "Why do you drink *my* mother's milk?"

The Department of Motherhood and Infancy is in charge of all the work concerning mothers and babies. It has started thousands of day nurseries in the villages. The peasants themselves contributed through their organisations 6,50,000 roubles for these nurseries in 1926. The number of nurseries increases rapidly as the peasants get to know them and appreciate their benefits.

But the Soviet Union is a vast area and all this change and improvement great as it is, has but touched the fringe of it. Most of the men and women are, as everywhere else, conservative and suspicious of new-fangled notions. Still, the new order has cut deep into the ancient soil, and in Turkestan and Yakutsk and Azerbaijan, where women till lately sat secluded behind the veil, women today sit as the equals of men in the council chambers of the republics.

## 16. Russia and India<sup>1</sup>

I have endeavoured in these articles to touch on some aspects of present day Russia. I have done so very superficially, for I do not claim special knowledge, and I have not considered here many subjects of exceeding interest. Nor have I considered the future prospects of the Soviet Union, and whether it will retain its aggressively communist character, or gradually develop a system more in harmony with that of its neighbours. Soon after the revolution Lenin wrote: "The outstanding achievement of the Revolution has been that Russia, by her political system, has in a few months overtaken the progressive countries. But this is not enough, the struggle admits of no compromise: it is either

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 25 July 1928.

to fail, or to overtake and even to surpass the progressive countries economically as well....either to go under or to move forward at full steam. Thus has the question been put by History." The struggle is indeed continuing but the period of militant communism is already over and the gentler methods of diplomacy are now being used more and more. Some people say that in spite of the desire of the communists to have a classless society new classes are gradually being formed in the Union. Whatever the future may bring, however, it may be said today that in spite of minor changes the struggle admits of no compromise. As Lenin said, Russia will either go under or move forward at full steam. A middle course seems hardly likely. And ten years have shown that Russia refuses to go under.

These are some of the questions which must interest the student of world affairs and politics and economics and history. The dynamic forces released by the revolution of 1917 have not played themselves out. They have made history and they will continue to make history and no man can afford to ignore them. We in India can least of all be indifferent to them. Russia is our neighbour, a giant sprawling half over Asia and Europe, and between such neighbours there can be either amity or enmity. Indifference is out of the question.

We have grown up in the tradition, carefully nurtured by England, of hostility to Russia. For long years past the bogey of a Russian invasion has been held up to us and been made the excuse of vast expenditure on our armaments. In the days of the Tsar we were told that the imperialism of Russia was for ever driving south, coveting an outlet to the sea, or may be India itself. The Tsar has gone but the rivalry between England and Russia continues and we are now told that India is threatened by the Soviet Government.

How far is this true? There can be no doubt that there is intense antagonism between British Imperial policy and Soviet Russia, and such antagonism often leads to war. Thus the danger of war is real. But will this war be of Russia's seeking, or does England desire to precipitate an armed conflict?

Russia has only recently passed through a period of international war and civil war, of famine and blockade, and above everything she desires peace to consolidate her economic position and build up on a sure foundation her new order of society. She has already attained a large measure of success and is working at high pressure and with "full steam" to develop peacefully her vast territories. War, even successful war, must put a stop to this process of consolidation and development, and is bound to delay indefinitely the full establishment of her new social order. She cannot welcome this. And so we have seen in the past few years that she has refused to be drawn into an armed conflict

in spite of great provocation and insult. In China, largely it is said at the instigation of England and some other powers, her embassy was raided<sup>2</sup> and her ambassador grossly insulted; in England the Arcos raid would ordinarily have been considered a sufficient *casus belli*. Her ambassadors<sup>3</sup> have been shot down in cold blood and her diplomatic agents imprisoned<sup>4</sup> and humiliated. But Russia has succeeded in avoiding war even at the cost of having to swallow her anger and resentment. To every student of recent history it is clear that Russia does not want war.

England on the other hand is notoriously preparing for war and refuses to agree to any effective scheme for disarmament or compulsory arbitration. Her attitude in the League of Nations has been one of frank and unabashed opposition to all such proposals. She will not suffer her empire to be included in any such scheme nor her imperial policy to be affected in any way. Only a few days ago she gave yet another instance of her determination not to loosen her grip on her empire in any way or change her aggressive imperialist policy for the sake of ensuring world peace. England's answer to the United States' proposal for the outlawry of war has been the hardest and most uncompromising in spite of the fine phrases in which it is wrapped. England is prepared to agree to any peace proposal, it practically says, subject to her having the right to fight for her imperial policy and adventures! A strange acceptance. The actual words of the British note to the States are: "There are certain regions of the world, the welfare and integrity of which constitute a special and vital interest for our peace and safety. His Majesty's Government have been at pains to make it clear in the past that interference with these regions cannot be suffered. Their protection against attack is to the British Empire a measure of self-defence. It must be clearly understood that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain accept the new treaty on the distinct understanding that it does not prejudice their freedom of action in this respect."

This in plain language means that the British Government retain full freedom to wage war when and where they will. But as if this was not enough, the British note makes a further reservation. It suggests

2. On 6 April 1927 the troops of the Chinese Nationalist government, instigated by the Western Powers, raided the Soviet Embassy in Peking. More than twenty Chinese employees were arrested as Communists and most of them were executed.
3. The Soviet ambassador in Poland was murdered on 7 June 1927.
4. In the summer of 1919 the Soviet Government sent a diplomatic mission, headed by I. O. Kolomitsev, to Iran. He was humiliated, imprisoned and finally murdered.

that the treaty should not be universally applicable "for there are some states whose governments have not yet been universally recognised." Every schoolboy knows that the principal state in the world whose government has not yet been universally recognised is Soviet Russia. Thus England after taking away by various reservations and qualifications all the effectiveness from the proposed treaty for the "unqualified renunciation of war," as the American note puts it, actually makes an exception of war against Russia. The unabashed frankness of these reservations and this exception is a little surprising but they are in full keeping with British policy. The whole basis of this policy has been to encircle Russia by pacts and alliances and ultimately to crush her. England has worked unceasingly for this end and has made the League of Nations an instrument of her policy. Locarno<sup>5</sup> was the result of this policy and the occasional flirtations of England with Germany<sup>6</sup> have also the isolation of Russia for their object. "Angur", the well-known spokesman of the British Foreign office, tells us candidly in a recent book that the growth of the League of Nations and the spirit of the Locarno pact are expressions of a desire to combat Bolshevism. It is the rigidity of the present British Government," he writes, "which builds up the wall of a united Europe against them (the Soviet Union)."

Thus it is absolutely clear from the official utterances and policy of British politicians that they eagerly desire a conflict with Russia and prepare for it and only await a suitable opportunity to wage open war. Many of the other great capitalist countries are equally opposed to the social theories and practices of Soviet Russia but they have no special political animus against her. It is only "the rigidity of the present British Government" that seeks to encircle and strangle Russia. It is equally clear that Russia eagerly desires to avoid war, but apprehensive of the dangers that threaten her she prepares for it, for she will not easily forego the freedom she has achieved at the cost of tremendous effort and sacrifice.

It is inconceivable that Russia in her present condition at least and for a long time to come will threaten India. She can desire no additional territory and even if she did the risks are too great for her. She is still mainly an agricultural country trying to develop her industries.

5. A series of agreements made in 1925 whereby Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy mutually guaranteed the peace in Western Europe, and Germany undertook to arbitration of her disputes with Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland.
6. The conciliatory policy towards Germany was marked by Germany's admission to the League of Nations, the regular payment of reparations under the Dawes Plan and the withdrawal of the Allied Commission to control German disarmament.

For this she requires capital and expert knowledge. She gets neither from India. She produces raw materials in abundance and not manufactured articles for export and dumping in foreign countries. So does India. The two countries are today too similar to be exploited by each other and there can be no economic motive for Russia to covet India.

Ordinarily Russia and India should live as the best of neighbours with the fewest points of friction. The continual friction that we see today is between England and Russia, not between India and Russia. Is there any reason why we in India should inherit the age-long rivalry of England against Russia? That is based on the greed and covetousness of British imperialism and our interests surely lie in ending this imperialism and not in supporting and strengthening it.

Indians have for generations been told to fear Russia and it is perhaps a little difficult to exorcise this fear today. But if we face the facts we can only come to one conclusion, and that is that India has nothing to fear from Russia. And having come to this conclusion we must make it clear that we shall not permit ourselves to be used as pawns in England's imperial game to be moved hither and thither for her benefit. We must continually proclaim, in the words of the Madras Congress resolution, "that in the event of the British Government embarking on any warlike adventure and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to co-operate with them in any way whatsoever." And if this declaration is made repeatedly and emphatically it may be that England may hesitate to embark on this adventure and India and the world may be spared the horrors of another great war.

Chanda

setting some saint or papa  
a long wooden staff with a sharp-edged  
steel edge at the end  
the ceremony on the tenth day  
performed by Shias to conclude the  
Muharram festival

Chenium

a mid-wife

Dai

wooden sticks used for beating drums

Dandas

a bed cover made of coarse cloth

Dashti

a festival usually observed in Allahabad,  
to celebrate Krishna's boyhood

Datkanda

completely

Devi

Goddess

Devdutta

a Hindu festival held usually in Oc-

(Dussehra)

tober to commemorate Rama's vic-

tory over Ravana



## GLOSSARY

Adh Kumbhi (Ardh Kumbh)	a festival every sixth year after the main Kumbh fair at Prayag
Aligol (Alighaul)	an organisation of Muslim volunteers
Arti	worship with lamps
Arya	an honoured person
Azan	call by Muslim priests at the time of prayers in the mosque
Bande Mataram	salute to mother-India, homage to motherland
Bania	a caste among Hindus traditionally given to trading
Bhagavat Gita	a Hindu scripture, containing Krishna's discourse to Arjun before battle
Bhajan	devotional songs
Bhandar	store house
Budmash	a bad character
Chabutra	a raised platform made of brick and mortar
Chal-gai	commencement of a quarrel
Chamars	one of the scheduled castes
Charion-ka-mela	a procession on poles and flags representing some saint or peer
Chavis	a long wooden staff with a sharp-edged steel disc at the end
Chehlum	the ceremony on the fortieth day performed by Shias to conclude the Muharrum festival
Dai	a mid-wife
Dankas	wooden sticks used for beating drums
Dasuti	a bed cover made of coarse cloth
Datkanda	a festival usually observed in Allahabad, to celebrate Krishna's boyhood exploits
Devi	Coddes
Dusehra (Dashera)	a Hindu festival held usually in October to commemorate Rama's victory over Ravana

Gadda	cushion
Ganesh	a Hindu deity
Ganga-mai	mother Ganges
Ganga-mai-ki-jai	hail ! mother Ganges
Ganja	hashish
Ghat	bathing place on river side
Hanuman	a Hindu deity
Jatha	a group of volunteers; a squad
Jathedar	leader of a group of volunteers
Kabaddi	an indigenous game involving test of stamina
Khaddar	coarse cloth woven by hand-spun threads
Khadi	hand-spun cloth
Kripan	sword
Kotwal	station officer, police
Kumbh Mela	a festival held every twelfth year at Prayag, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain
Kunjras	a scheduled caste whose traditional occupation was supply of vegetables
Kutcha	raw; unmetalled road
Lathi	a wooden staff
Lathiwala	one who can wield a wooden staff
Leechee	a pulpy fruit
Lihaf	quilt
Lokmanya	universally respected; a title bestowed on Tilak
Mali	a gardener
Mehndi	an arc carried in procession during Muharrum
Mela	a fair
Mohalla (muhalla)	a locality
Moharrum (Muharrum)	a Muslim festival
Nazul	government lands in urban areas
Octroi	tax levied on articles entering municipal limits
Pasis	a scheduled caste in and around Allahabad
Peepul	a kind of tree
Pinjrapole	a cowshed
Prajatantric	republican; democratic

Prasad	food distributed after offering at an altar
Puja (pooja)	worship
Pujari	priest
Puranas	ancient Hindu scriptures
Purdnashin	a veiled woman
Purna Swaraj (Purna Swatantrata)	full independence
Rais	a nobleman
Sadhu	one who has renounced the world
Samaj	society
Sangam	confluence of rivers
Sangathan	organization
Sawan (Shrawan)	a month in the Hindu calendar
Seva	service
Seva Dal	service corps
Shahidi Jatha	a squad of volunteers courting martyrdom
Shankh	conch
Sherbet	a sweet drink
Shivalaya	a temple of Siva
Sitar	a musical instrument
Srijut	a form of address like 'Mr' or 'Monsieur'
Subzimandi	a vegetable market
Swadeshi	indigenous; country-made
Tattis	curtain made of bamboo frames
Tazia	a pyramid-like structure made of paper and bamboo and taken in procession during Muharrum
Thakurdwara	a place of worship
Teerth	a place of pilgrimage
Vedas	ancient Hindu scriptures



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